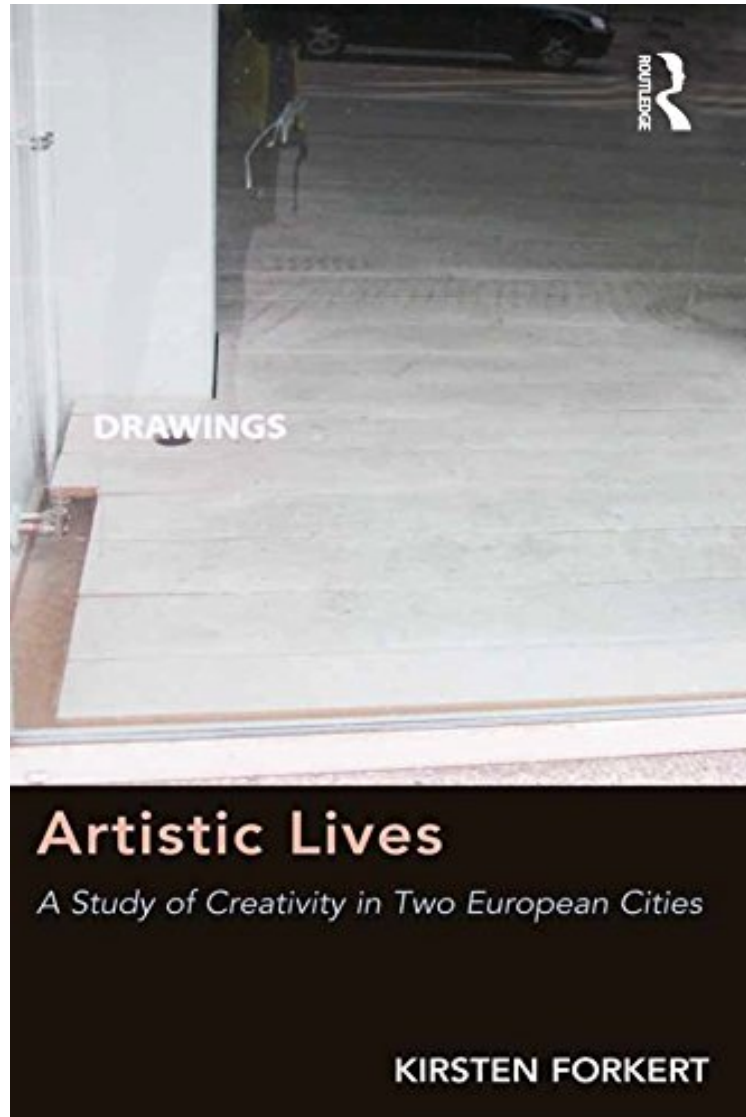


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# Artistic Lives: A Study of Creativity in Two European Cities

*Kirsten Forkert*

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**Kirsten Forkert : Artistic Lives: A Study of Creativity in Two European Cities** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Artistic Lives: A Study of Creativity in Two European Cities:

Artistic Lives examines cultural production as a non-standard, self-directed, and frequently unpaid activity, which is susceptible to developments that affect the availability of unstructured time. It engages with discourses which have historically had little to do with the arts, including urban sociology and social policy research, to explore the social

conditions and identities of ordinary artists, revealing the importance of the cost of living or access to housing, benefits or employment in determining who is able to become an artist or sustain an artistic career. The book thus challenges recent policy discourses that celebrate the ability of cultural producers to create something from nothing, and, more generally, the myth of creativity as an individual phenomenon, divorced from social context. Presenting rich interview material with artists and arts professionals in London and Berlin, together with ethnographic descriptions, *Artistic Lives* engages with debates surrounding Post-Fordism, gentrification and the nature of authorship, to raise challenging questions about the function of culture and the role of cultural producers within contemporary capitalism. An empirically grounded exploration of the identity of the modern artist and his or her ability to make a living in neoliberal societies, *Artistic Lives* will be of interest to students and scholars researching urban studies, the sociology of art and creative cultures, social stratification and social policy.

'Artists have been moved from the margins to the center of the urban economy. Is that good or bad? Forkert's incisive and carefully-researched study is the most up-to-date analysis of the outcome. The differences she draws between London and Berlin illustrate the sheer intelligence of this very useful book.' Andrew Ross, University of New York, USA and author of *Nice Work If You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* 'A compelling and engaging study of artistic lives raising challenging questions about the purposes served by culture within contemporary capitalism. The result is a powerful argument for the necessity of time and space for cultural activities - not only for those who define themselves as professional artists, but for all.' Karen Littleton, The Open University, UK 'Kirsten Forkert takes seriously the way that artists lead their lives. She lifts the romantic veil from the idea of a removal from society to show the centrality and vulnerability of cultural labor today. Drawing on her experience as an artist, her commitment as an activist, and her research as a scholar, she has produced a landmark text.' Toby Miller, City University, UK About the Author Kirsten Forkert is a lecturer in media theory at Birmingham City University, UK.