



CREATIVE ECONOMIES IN POST-INDUSTRIAL CITIES

Manufacturing a (Different) Scene

Edited by Myrna Margulies Breitbart, Hampshire College, USA

There has been much written on the new creative economy, especially on the so-called "creative class," with lifestyle preferences that favor trendy new restaurants, mountain biking, and late night clubbing in large global urban settings. This "creative class," flagship cultural destinations, and other forms of

commodity-driven cultural production, now occupy a relatively uncritical place in the revitalization schemes of most cities up and down the urban hierarchy.

In contrast, this book focuses on how culture-infused economic opportunities are understood and incorporated into planning in small- to medium-size post-industrial cities and working-class neighborhoods in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Authors examine to what extent places rooted in an industrial past are able to envisage a different economic future. They question whether these visions replicate strategies employed in larger cities or put forth plans that better suit the unique histories and challenges of communities that remain outside the global limelight. Maintaining a critical edge, authors incorporate critiques of mainstream creative economy theories and practices into case studies that depart from the standard planning lexicon.

Exploring the potential intersections between a creative and sustainable economy raises issues that are central to how urban regeneration is approached and neighborhood needs and assets are understood. Several chapters examine spaces and planning processes that hold the possibility of addressing inequality by forging new economic and social relationships and by embarking on more inclusive and collaborative forms of development. These examples focus on building upon the assets of existing residents and broadly define creativity and talent. They also acknowledge both the economic and non-monetary value of many cultural practices.

Structural barriers and unequal distributions of power make the search for viable urban development alternatives especially difficult for smaller post-industrial cities and risk derailing even creative grassroots initiatives. While acknowledging obstacles, the book moves beyond critique and focuses on how the growing economy surrounding culture, the arts, and ecological design can be harnessed and transformed to best benefit such cities and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Myrna Margulies Breitbart's book compiles a variety of examples that show how, with foresight, leadership, and an expansive view of creativity, arts and culture can transform the economies of even unexpected places. A vital counterpoint to the attention to creativity in mega-cities, this book makes an important contribution to our understanding of the economics of culture.

Stuart Rosenfeld, Regional Technology Strategies, Inc,
North Carolina, USA

Breitbart's book is a much needed resource to show how new creative economies can revitalize post-industrial cities that have been abandoned in the wake of globalization. Using real world examples, it describes what has worked and what has not, and most importantly, it shows how even smaller cities can come together across lines of race, ethnicity, and class, to benefit both current residents and newcomers.

Robert Goodman, author of *After the Planners*, *The Last Entrepreneurs*,
and *The Luck Business*

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