

## **What is Creative about the Creative Workforce?**

*This project aims to explore and understand the skills, attributes and embodied practices of the creative workforce in order to begin to develop business support policies and strategies for investing in the creative workforce of the future.*

It is funded by the London Development Agency and Creative Partnerships (Arts Council). It is being carried out in conjunction with Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia (funder Australia Council) and is a pilot study with ambitions to establish a more substantial international project in 2008/2009.

## **The Research**

This project aims to produce an 'anatomy' of creative practices through study, interview and observations of creative work in practice and *in situ*. This is an ethnographic approach and aims to extrapolate principles by aggregating the study of individuals.

The aim is to set up a series of comparative research sites contrasting and comparing work in 'creative industry firms,' with work in other 'knowledge-based' sectors, such as pharmaceuticals or financial services.

The plan is to spend 1 day in around 6 different kinds of firms/workplaces covering a range of occupations representing private and public sectors. Our aim is to ask each our three research questions of each site, namely:

1. How is creative work defined within the firm (e.g. new ideas, cultural production)? What is the activity of creative work and what is seen as its outputs?
2. How the work is organised and what are the creative work process? What are the features or actions of creative making?
3. How people who have been trained or have 'creative' qualifications carry out creative work? How do they differ from other (non qualified) workers carrying out similar tasks?

The study will thus produce six 'snapshot' accounts with a commentary on each reflecting on both questions of content ( the nature of the creative work) and method (the advantages and limitations of such techniques in isolating the nature and meaning of creative work).

Three sites will be chosen for further study observing the creative work and trying to see how ethnographic /observational insights allow us to provide depth and fine grain to the analysis.

Findings from this phase of the work will be written up for dissemination in appropriate journals and publications as well as producing reports for funders.

**Kate Oakley & Julian Sefton-Green, January 2007.**