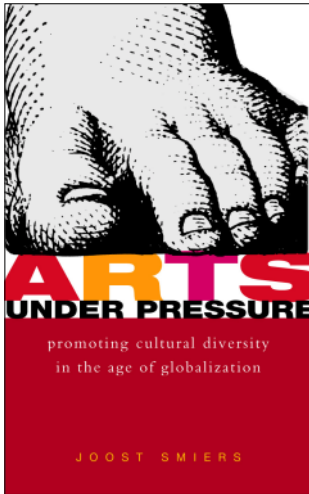


ARTS UNDER PRESSURE

Promoting Cultural Diversity in the Age of Globalisation

Joost Smiers



ARTS UNDER PRESSURE analyses the relevant forces behind decision making in cultural matters worldwide, specifically in the field of the arts, under the influence of economic globalisation. The book deals with all the arts, in all parts of the world. The arts are a field where emotional incompatibilities, social conflicts, and questions of status between people collide with great intensity. Add to this the huge economic interests at stake in the cultural field and we find ourselves in highly charged territory. This is certainly the case now that economic globalisation is causing substantial changes in the structure of many institutions in the cultural field.

The book focuses on the cycle of creation, production, distribution, promotion, reception and influence. It asks the key questions: who has the power to decide what reaches audiences, in what quantities, with what contents and surrounded by what kinds of ambiances? Refuting the existence of a mass culture, *Arts Under Pressure* argues that what exists are artistic creations that are produced, distributed and promoted on a mass scale. This mass scale pushes aside public attention to the diversity that - from a democratic perspective - any society desperately needs.

Smiers argues that countries must take culture out of the grip of the WTO and sign a new International Treaty on Cultural Diversity, which would give them the full right to take all measures necessary to reduce significantly the market domination of cultural industries and to formulate their own cultural policies. The neoliberal world order is not capable of protecting what is fragile, and this is certainly the case for the blossoming of artistic diversity at a local level. The author sets out a completely new vision of copyright: the abolition of which, he suggests, would be advantageous for artists, third world countries and the public domain. In the digital domain we can see that the spontaneous meltdown of copyright is already happening.

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Joost Smiers is Professor of Political Science of the Arts, Utrecht School of the Arts, The Netherlands, and formerly Visiting Professor, Department of World Arts and Cultures, UCLA, Los Angeles

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