

Alternative Economy Cultures (alt.econ.cult)

written by Andrew Gryf Paterson, March 12, 2009

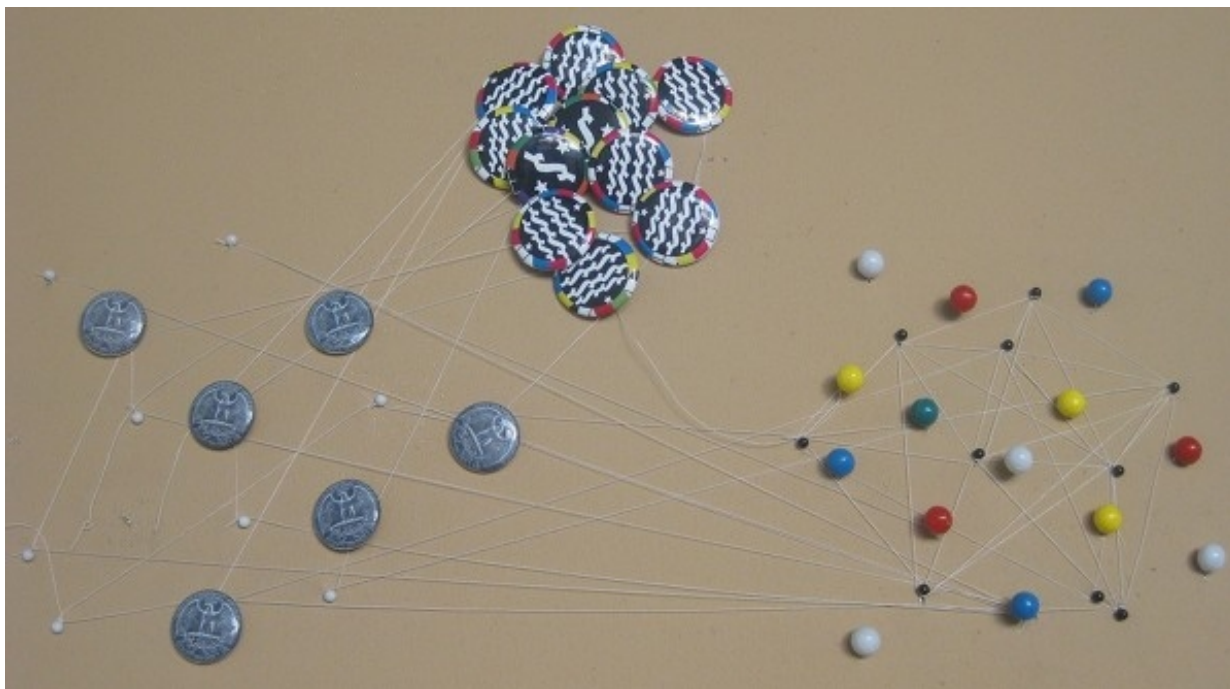


Photo: Geraldine Juarez / 'Tanda Foundation' installation

The **'Alternative Economy Cultures' (alt.econ.cult)** programme on **April 3rd & 5th** brings together leading international and Finnish thinkers, cultural practitioners and activists, to present alternative economic visions.

The **seminar** aims to tackle not just the financial, but the social, cultural, institutional, human, material, emotional and intellectual forms of capital. Not just about individual gain, boosting, balancing or bail-outs, but common good, peer-to-peer, shared wealth and appropriate reward for effort involved. Bridging the gap between presentations, reflections and things-to-be-done, the **discussion-based workshop about peer-fundraising** asks: Can the crowd-sourcing phenomena be applied to support alternative cultural events in Finland?

Cultural production and social-networking, especially the digital online versions of the recent decade, have promoted new ideas of wealth, opportunity, scarcity, and exchange. Importantly, it also reminds us of old ones. Surrounding those ideas are developing practices, cultures and entrepreneurship. Some of these have long roots and heritage. There was an old Scots phrase, *common weil*, meaning 'common good' or 'public welfare' way back in the 16th century. The concept of 'mutual aid', for example, was reflected upon by Russian intellectuals in the late 19th century as an important quality in human evolution. Certainly, cooperation, especially in the rural villages been a feature of everyday and seasonal life for centuries in different parts of the world; in Finland, for example, through the common understanding of *talkoot*. Following, the social-clubs (*seurantalot*) built in the early 20th century were based on peer-to-peer activity. In the contemporary context similar motivations form within internet collaboration and Wikipedia entries. Commonly, moving house is often done with peer-to-peer mutual aid, and chipping in together with friends to buy a boat is an appreciated local example of peer-funding.

Thanks to digital tools and internet network connections, the ability to creatively adjust and innovate has expanded to the mass population. Established holders of wealth are challenged as others (often portrayed as the younger generation) gain new materials, resources, and the ability to create new value. The Pirate Bay has been on trial in Sweden, and free culture is maybe not running only on volunteer energies. Furthermore, technologies are enabling us to participate in and co-ordinate production - raising and distributing 'added-value' - in a more transparent fashion.

Market-led capitalism and state-led socialism have both crashed in spectacular forms over the last 30 years. We are currently amid financial crisis where virtual credit affects physical and emotional health. These systems have proven to be unsustainable in their use of resources and people, and lead towards environmental and economic collapse. Can we move forward in a sustainable and ethical way, leaving behind inequalities, appropriation and exploitation?

Friday 3rd April, 10.00 - 18.00

FULL 1-DAY SEMINAR

Cultural practitioners, activists, and economic theorists from Finland and abroad, working from different contexts, strategies and institutional backgrounds, have been invited to contribute to this theme.

On the Friday morning, veteran-activist **Michael Albert of ZCom** (US) will present his theory of 'Participatory Economics (Parecon)', and writer-researcher **Michel Bauwens of P2P Foundation** (BE/TH) will speak about his vision of 'Peer-to-Peer Economics and the Revolution in Values'. Both are in Finland thanks to individual pledges of enthusiasts and donations from like-minded organisations.

To start the afternoon, a local heritage keynote, Ruralia Institute research director **Tapani Köppä** (FI) remarks on village cooperation in Finland.

Researching the field, politically-engaged artist **Oliver Ressler** (AT) speaks of his experience interviewing utopians, while philosopher **Tere Vadén** (FI) reflects upon the sustainability of open source projects. Network theorist **Felix Stalder** (AT) and **Sara Sajjad of Piratbyrå** (SE) will light IP sparks to speak about remix and copy economies 'in the swarm' online.

Project-examples of applied action and design follow. **Wojtek Mejor** (PL) shares with us the free cultural world of events in Warsaw and techniques for knowing what's going on, where. Lead negotiator **Saija-Riitta Sadeoja of Porkkanamafia** (FI) will tell the story of a mob, developing into an institution committed to responsible-business activism, and performance artist **Eero Yli-Vakkuri of Uuva Project** (FI) will report on 1 year of promoting and using the Uuva currency to re-numerate under- or unpaid cultural work.

The last two presentations will cover similar ground, but from two very different cultural contexts: **Geraldine Juarez of Tanda Foundation** (MX) will present her 'TandaTanda' events, artefacts and techniques, materialising the donation of funds online for cultural project grants. Local co-founder **Kristoffer Lawson of Scred** (FI) will also explain and compare his peer-funding online system which emerged from organising the renowned Alternative Party events.

[Download detailed seminar schedule \[.pdf 48K\]](#)

[Download speakers biographies and presentation/project abstracts \[.pdf 173K\]](#)

Morning session 10.00 - 12.00 in Kiasma Theatre

Chaired by **Marita Muukkonen & Ivor Stodolsky of Perpetuum Mobile**.

Afternoon session 13.00 - 16.00 in Kiasma Theatre, 16.30-18.00 in Kiasma Seminar room

Chaired by **Roope Mokka of Demos Helsinki**.

Please register/sign up for seminar by 31st March to guarantee a seat!
(Theatre holds 200, Seminar room 80-90 persons only).

Send email to **alt.econ.cult [-at-] pixelache.ac**

(choose subject-line: friday morning -or- friday morning + afternoon)

Free entry!

Festival pass not needed, but volunteer contributions of 5/10/30/50€ welcome.

The online peer-funding system accepts donations of 5, 10, 30 or 50 euros.

[DONATE ONLINE! \(suorita maksu suomeksi\)](#)

There will also be a [Piñata](#), specially-made by [Geraldine Juárez](#), placed at the Kiasma Theatre entrance to gather offline donations.

Sunday 5th April, 15.00 - 17.00

WORKSHOP ABOUT PEER-FUNDRAISING

Afternoon session 15.00 - 17.00 at Demos Helsinki Office (Laivurinkatu 41)
Hosted by **Andrew Gryf Paterson** and **Roope Mokka**.

Bridging the gap between presentations, reflections and things-to-be-done, **Geraldine Juarez** (MX) will lead a discussion-based workshop about peer-fundraising. Explore the crowd-sourcing phenomena seen in Obama's election campaign. Can it be applied to support cultural events in Finland?

Featuring also **Michel Bauwens** (BE/TH), **Kristoffer Lawson of Scred** (FI) and others.

Organisation and cooperation

The full 1-day seminar and related 'peer-funding' workshop has been initiated and organised by artist-researcher **Andrew Gryf Paterson** (independent / agryfp.info / Medialab TaiK), in cooperation with **Marita Muukkonen & Ivor Stodolsky of Perpetuum Mobile** (perpetuummobile.org) and **Roope Mokka of Demos Helsinki** (demos.fi). We aim to offer a new strand to the Pixelache Network discourse (pixelache.ac).

Press contacts, photos and interview requests:

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Peer-funding experiment



Nordkapp.



An online donation system has been set up in collaboration with partner organisation **Demos Helsinki**, with the in-kind support of **Suomen Verkkomaksut** and implemented by **Nordkapp**, to explore the 'crowdfunding' phenomena seen in Obama's election campaign. Can it be applied to support cultural events in Finland?

This 'Alternative Economy Cultures' programme was difficult to fund via the usual institutional channels. Already both keynote speakers (Albert and Bauwens) will be present in Helsinki thanks to the support of seed-funding from enthusiastic individual peers and non-profit organisations, covering their upfront travel costs.

We aim to raise money to recover the outlay costs of organising.
We will spread the surplus back among the contributors in the form of project grants and further events.

The online peer-funding system accepts donations of 5, 10, 30 or 50 euros.
[DONATE ONLINE! \(suorita maksu suomeksi\)](#)

There will also be a **Piñata**, specially-made by **Geraldine Juárez**, placed at the Kiasma Theatre entrance to gather offline donations.

Secured financial sponsors and supporters



The seminar event has been supported with a donation by **FiFi and Voima**.

The organiser secured the presence of 3 International seminar speakers - Michael Albert, Michel Bauwens and Oliver Ressler - thanks to their receipt of a writer's fee for an article in Frame-Fund's **Framework** journal.

Funding towards participants presence in the seminar/workshop has been raised from individual, organisation or institutional contributions as follows:



Michael Albert has been supported by **3 personal donations** and **Vasemmistofoorumi, ATTAC Finland**, and the **Department of Political Science** at the University of Helsinki.

Michel Bauwens has been supported by **5 personal donations**.

Geraldine Juarez's presence in Finland is thanks to the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs** support of the **'Signals of the South' programme** in the Pixelache Festival.

Oliver Ressler and Felix Stalder are attending thanks to the support of Cultural Attaché of **The Austrian Embassy in Helsinki**.

Sara Sajjad's travel from Stockholm and accomodation with the support of the **Svenska Kulturfonden**.

Tapani Köppä's travel and accomodation is covered by his employer-institution, **University of Helsinki**.

Tere Vadén's travel is covered by his employer-institution, **University of Tampere**.

The other presenters, organiser and chairpersons are supported by **their own means** or in-kind support, and currently give their time voluntarily.

Event programme acknowledgements

Much gratitude to Niklas Vainio, Mikko Lipiäinen, Markku Aattonen, Olga Mashkina and Ruurik Holm for their nominations to the programme. Unfortunately not all nominations could attend the event or the necessary support could be raised to include them.

Special thanks to Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky of Perpetuum Mobile, Matti Ylönen of KEPA, Andrea Botero, Olga Mashkina, and fellow peers of the seminar in the planning process, for their support, feedback, encouragement and advice.