**Assessing the Contemporary Art Novel in Spanish and Portuguese: Cultural Labour, Personal Identification and the Materialisation of Alternative Art Worlds (ARTFICTIONS)**

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The main goal of ARTFICTIONS is to explain how contemporary literature is dealing with artistic creativity when artmaking is no longer a specialised field of cultural production, but rather an expanded field of socioeconomic interaction, personal and creative self-definition and collective imagination. **This project advances a new paradigm for the analysis of literary fictions concerned with artistic creativity and cultural production**.

The project advances a new concept, “art novel”, instead of the most used “artist novel”, to emphasize the socially constitutive nature of the mode(l)s of aesthetic education advanced in this literary genre. The main reason for this has to do with the belief that contemporary fiction dealing with artistic creativity is no longer concerned with the specialized figure of the artist, but rather with more blurred processes of visual creativity that no longer pertain to a specific field of cultural production.

From this angle, the project **understands the contemporary art novel as thematically falling outside of the parameters of the specific field of artistic production**. ARTFICTIONS goes beyond state of the art research and redefines the debates on contemporary fiction and artmaking by conceiving the art novel as a crucial tool to understand processes of subject formation, personal and professional self-investment, precariousness and cultural labour in times of late neoliberalism.

 ARTFICTIONS is organised around **two main overarching aims**:

**1-Redefining the Contemporary Art Novel**

The art novel of *Künstlerroman* is a recurrent genre in European literary tradition: authors such as Balzac, Goethe or Joyce dedicated some of their best novels to imagining the life of artists. The art novel or *Künstlerroman* is traditionally concerned with the lives of individuals who rely on their creative genius to produce unique artistic objects.

The **first aim of ARTFICTIONS** has to do with **redefining, repositioning and decolonising the contemporary art novel as a central platform where radical understandings of the social role of cultural production and alternative modes of self-definition are tested and developed at a global scale.**

This first aim includes two sub-objectives: to use the contemporary art novel to problematise issues of artistic and cultural labour operating at an expanded level; and to study the relationship between art novels and processes of self-definition, creative self-investment and subject formation.

**ARTFICTIONS’s second overarching aim is to offer the first systematic critical analysis of contemporary art novels written in Spanish and Portuguese emerging in Europe, Africa and the Americas.** In the context of the project, “contemporary” means something more than just “now”, as it indicates a way of being “in time” that implies speculative thought about the kind of futures that our present choices can materialise.

By examining in detail a body of literary fiction that remains under-explored and comparing and taking into consideration contemporary art novels from three continents, **the main gain** linked to this aim will be to produce the first global examination of contemporary art novels dealing with creative and cultural economies.