

Research seminar with Dr Sam Whiting

Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow, School of Media and Communication,
RMIT University, Australia



Wednesday 27th August 2025

12pm – 1pm, Comenius Meeting Room (Ø10-212-1)

Live Music as a Public Good: Alternative Ownership and Operating Models for Venues in the United Kingdom and Europe

A compounding set of problems, ranging from inflation to consolidation, have made it almost impossible to run a small, dedicated live music venue as a commercial enterprise in many of Australia's major cities. This is because the sector is facing a significant shift in the way in which small venues and live music are valued and engaged with, all of which indicate an increasing inevitability: market failure. However, the default Australian model of a commercially leased music venue that is run as a for-profit small business remains largely unchallenged, despite multiple precedents and alternatives abroad.

In this seminar, Sam will explore preliminary findings from two months fieldwork in the United Kingdom and Europe researching alternative ownership and operating models for grassroots music venues as part of a Churchill Fellowship. These venues range from Community Interest Companies, cooperatives, and charity-owned spaces in the UK to publicly owned not-for-profits and community-run squats in central and northern Europe. The research presented will engage with a variety of peak bodies and advocacy organisations, such as the UK Music Venue Trust, Europe's peak body for live music LiveDMA, Amsterdam's Office of Night Mayor, the Berlin Club Commission, several European and British universities, as well as dozens of innovative and alternative music venues.

Sam is a Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow at RMIT University, Australia, pursuing a project focused on crisis in the Australian music industries. His research is primarily concerned with issues of capital, labour, and value as they relate to the cultural economy, as well as the impact of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and other technologies of automation on the Australian music industries. Dr Whiting's recent book, *Small Venues: Precarity, Vibrancy and Live Music*, is out now through Bloomsbury. Sam is also a 2024 Churchill Fellowship recipient.

For further information about the seminar, please contact: ecou@sdu.dk