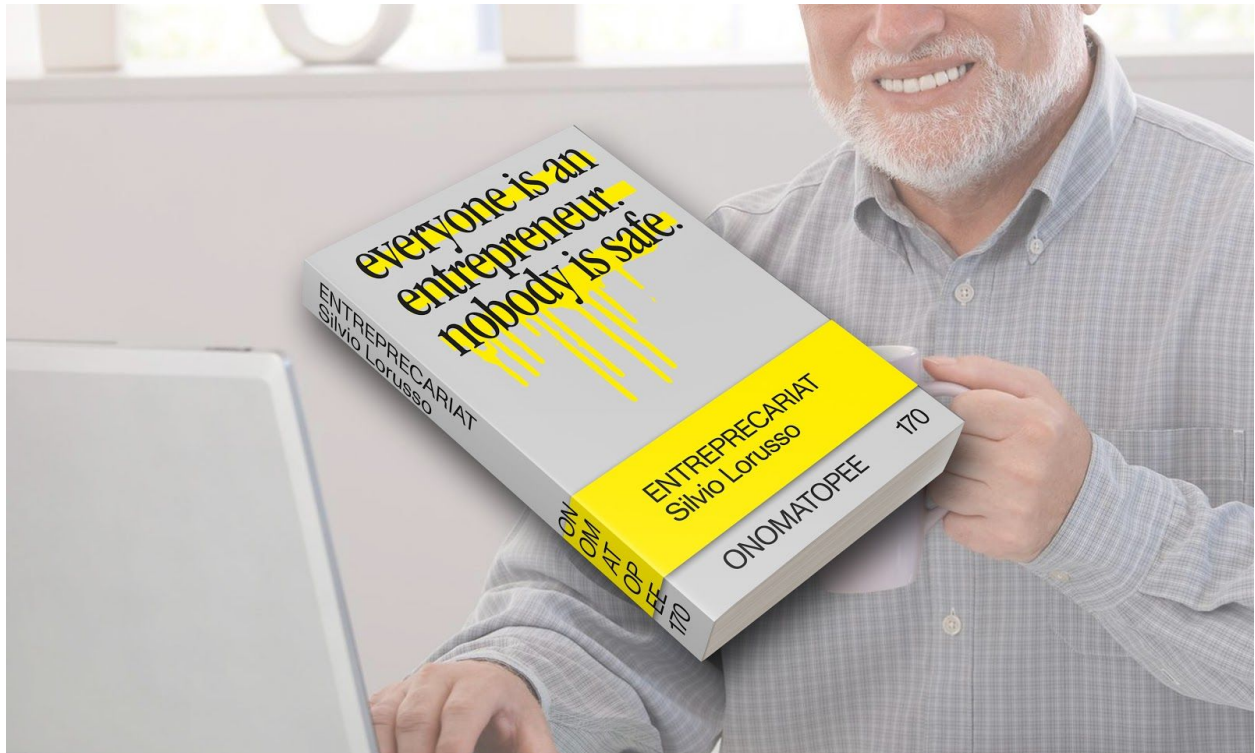


Entreprecariat: We Are All Entrepreneurs. Nobody Is Safe.

Press Kit



10,5 x 17 cm
glossy / uncoated paper
paperback
260 pages (with illustrations)
45560 words
€18,00

Entrepreneur or precarious worker? These are the terms of a cognitive dissonance that turns existence into a shaky project in perennial start-up phase. Silvio Lorusso guides us through the entreprecariat, a world where change is natural and healthy, whatever it may bring. A world populated by motivational posters, productivity tools, mobile offices and self-help techniques. A world in which a mix of entrepreneurial ideology and widespread precarity is what regulates professional social media, online marketplaces for self-employment and crowdfunding platforms for personal needs. The result? A life in *permanent beta*, with sometimes tragic implications.

Entreprecariat is about entrepreneurialism, but it's not a manual to "make it". It's not a hagiography of visionaries like Steve Jobs or Elon Musk. On the contrary, the book describes the reality surrounding the so-called "self-entrepreneurs": students, freelancers, unemployed

(and sometimes even employees) pushed or forced to develop an entrepreneurial mentality not to succumb to the growing precariousness that affects the professional, the economic and the existential sphere. Welcome to the *entreprenariat*, where the entrepreneurial spirit is a curse rather than a blessing.

Published originally in Italian by Krisis Publishing and then by Onomatopée in October 2019, *Entreprenariat* derives from the [eponymous blog](#) launched by Silvio Lorusso in 2016. Since then, the term “*entreprenariat*” and its Italian counterpart has been adopted by journalists, theorists and artists alike. They have been talking about *entreprenariat* in relation to the dilemmas of Millennials, the creative exploitation of Hackathons, the fatigue of considering sociality a strategic investment. The book not only offers a bleak overview of these issues but also a worthwhile dissection of their premises.

Entreprenariat includes a dense iconographic apparatus witnessing the spread of entrepreneurial propaganda. The design and structure of the book, inspired by the language of branding, subverts the stereotypical registers of entrepreneurship. In doing so, *Entreprenariat* appeals both to the free enterprise enthusiast and the innovation pessimist.

Book Structure

Entreprenariat consists of:

- a foreword by Geert Lovink, Dutch media theorist and author of *Networks Without a Cause* and *Social Media Abyss* (Polity Press). Published in English on Lovink’s [blog](#)
- an afterword by Raffaele Alberto Ventura, author of *Teoria della classe disagiata* (Minimum Fax)

The book is divided into the following chapters:

- *Core Values*: dedicated to the evolution of entrepreneurship, the various interpretations of the precarious condition, and the relationship between entrepreneurial spirit and precarity. Parts of the chapter were published in English on the author’s [blog](#)
- *Assets*: dedicated to the dimensions affected and transformed by the *entreprenariat*. Specifically: space (coworking, office, remote work, digital nomadism), time (productivity, efficiency, procrastination, sleep, busyness), mind (emotional labor, positivity, courtesy, optimism, praise of failure). Parts of the chapter were published in English on the [Pervasive Labour Union Zine](#) and on the author’s [blog](#)
- *Platforms*: dedicated to the digital environments that intensify the dynamics of the *entreprenariat*. Specifically: LinkedIn, the social network for professionals; Fiverr, the largest online marketplace dedicated to freelance services; and finally GoFundMe, a

crowdfunding site specialized in fundraising for personal needs. Parts of the chapter were published in English in [Modes of Criticisms 3](#) and in [Moneylab Reader 2](#)

Press

- CheFare: “Un’exit strategy dal realismo capitalista”, Tiziano Bonini, 2019
- Quaderni d’altri tempi: “Proletari di tutto il mondo, imprenditorializzatevi!”, Stefano Oricchio, 2019
- Giornale di Brescia: “Siamo tutti imprenditori. Nessuno è al sicuro”, Laura Fasani
- Digicult: “We Are All Entrepreneurs. Nobody Is Safe. Interview with Silvio Lorusso”, Filippo Lorenzin, 2019
- Vice Italia: “Il paradosso di essere freelance”, Antonella Di Biase, 2018
- Junge Welt: “Der Startup-Kult ist eine religiöse Geschichte”, Anselm Lenz, 2017
- Lettera43: “Entreprecariat, Lorusso spiega i pro e i contro di essere imprenditori di se stessi” Samuele Cafasso, 2017
- *General Theory of the Precariat*, Alex Foti, Institute of Network Cultures, 2017
- *Teoria della classe disagiata*, Raffaele Alberto Ventura, Minimum Fax, 2017
- *The Quantified Self in Precarity: Work, Technology and What Counts*, Phoebe Moore, Routledge, 2017
- “Hackathons as Co-optation Ritual: Socializing Workers and Institutionalizing Innovation in the ‘New’ Economy” di Sharon Zukin e Max Papadantonakis. In *Precarious Work*, edited by Arne L. Kalleberg and Steven P. Vallas, 2017
- “The Aesthetics Of Productive Anxiety”, Nicola Bozzi, *Digimag Journal 75*, 2017

The Author



[Silvio Lorusso](#) (1985) is an artist and designer from Italy. He's an affiliated researcher at the Institute of Network Cultures of Amsterdam, a tutor at the Royal Academy of Art in Den Haag and a researcher at Willem De Kooning Academy. He's also a member of varia and part of the editorial board of Italian graphic design magazine *Progetto Grafico*. His work was presented at Re:Publica (DE), MaXXI (IT), Transmediale (DE), The Photographers' Gallery (UK), Drugo More (HR), Kunsthalle Wien (AT), Vögele Kultur Zentrum (CH), NRW-Forum (DE), MoneyLab (NL), Impakt (NL), Sight & Sound (CA), Adhocracy (GR), etc. He holds a Ph.D. in Design Sciences from the School of Doctorate Studies – Iuav University of Venice. His writing has appeared in several magazine and publications, including *Pagina99*, *Not*, *Immaterial Labour Union Zine*, *Prismo*, *Modes of Criticism*, *Printed Web 3*, *Metropolis M*, *Progetto Grafico*, *Digicult*, *Diid*, and *Doppiozero*. His work has been featured in, among others, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, and *Wired*. He lives in Rotterdam and lectures internationally.

Excerpts

From the foreword and introduction:

“In *Entreprecariat* Silvio Lorusso confronts us with our beautified mess that is no longer an accident or a tragic sign of a never-ending decay but an integral part of the overall layout. Today's design culture is an expression of our intense prototype lives. We, the exhausted class, want so much, we are the experience junkies, yet make remarkable little transformative progress. Our precarious state has become perpetual.” (Geert Lovink)

“Should we give in to this life in permanent beta? Is it possible to reject entrepreneurial monoculture by accepting the demands raised by the precarious discourse? Are art and irony useful at all? While raising some doubts about these tools, the book suggests some possible directions to realize *this* venture. Refusing both victimization and euphoria [...] Entreprenariat is the mirror of a society in which everyone is an entrepreneur and nobody is safe.”

From the first chapter:

“Entrepreneurship: sense or sensibility? If on the one hand the entrepreneurial attitude aims to rationalise all activities, emotions and relationships (Jeff Bezos claims his decision to abandon a shining career in finance to create Amazon was dictated by a “regret minimization framework”), on the other hand it betrays a passionate dimension that makes someone’s *disposition* a key element of success. Silicon Valley insider journalist Sarah Lacy says entrepreneurs are optimistic by nature. Taken to its extreme consequences, optimism becomes what Mark Fisher, after David Smail, calls “magical voluntarism”, which is the idea you just need to crave something enough for it to happen. And who needs to channel their own will more than entrepreneurs, immersed as they are in the uncertainty of a continuous and natural change? The Dionysian thus becomes a complement to the Apollonian, the irrational is rationalised in order to create a formula that can be repeated.”

“The misalignment between individual expectations and material reality (what we earlier called status imbalance and then class dysphoria) widens the gap between cooperation and competition. Internal struggles fomented by professional competition, social atomisation and artificial division into castes and subclasses prevent the precariat from becoming a cohesive movement. The precariat’s biggest problem, that of creating a ‘we’, clashes with the overwhelming entrepreneurial imperative to produce, affirm and manage a ‘me’.”

“[...] in the face of widespread economic and employment insecurity, Schumpeter’s pyramid has been reversed, or rather, it has disintegrated and the rubble is everywhere. Everyone is called to — or coerced into — free enterprise (even employees, as the concept of intrapreneur suggests). This is the general sense of what we call entreprenariat.”

From the second chapter:

“Personal productivity is the aesthetic dimension of the work ethic. It is measured to increase efficiency but also to materialise one’s own busyness, thus demonstrating to oneself and to others that one is occupied. Why do we repeat to each other the obsessive refrain of “I don’t have time”? Because [...] busyness is no longer just a moral

imperative (“Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins” said Max Weber) but is also a status symbol, a form of economic positioning that is the reversal of Veblen’s traditional leisure: today, being wealthy does not mean having more free time, but being more overburdened.”

“As the traditional office dissolves into computers and a series of informal semi-public or private spaces (not least of which one’s bed or kitchen), we find ourselves beginning to idealise it. We are at the dawn of a new era of *office nostalgia*, which feeds on a romantic idea of the cubicle, of the casual chat at the coffee machine which strengthen complicity between colleagues. The traditional office becomes a symbol of authority that employees can rail and conspire against.”

“Although there are cases in which emotional work involves the display of negative emotions (think of debt collectors), it is fair to say that the contemporary world of work is mostly characterised by a positive sentimental spectrum. We are talking docility, courtesy, optimism, enthusiasm, exaltation and sometimes even fervour. This emotional sphere is useful on the one hand to eliminate any friction in social relationships and on the other to position oneself, projecting an image consistent with the entrepreneurial requirements of the job.”

From the third chapter:

“Deliberately incarnating the collective obsession with work, competition and success, LinkedIn makes users a bit more aware of it. When the ranking system is so visible, they might start to question whether it is actually significant. This distrust, already involving LinkedIn’s spammy messages, makes it a goofy mascot to make fun of for things that we are dead serious about.”

“In affluent societies, will everyone just be an ‘art director’ who creates visions and ideas that are then put into practice somewhere else by someone else? If so, what will become of professional identity and skills... of one’s *trade* (a word that already sounds outdated). Roughly summarising the effects of the popularisation of digital technologies, we can identify three ‘revolutions’. The first concerns the advent of personal computers, which enabled access to tools. The second, that of the web, enabled access to distribution channels. Finally, the third, that of the gig economy (still in progress), ensures access to (cheap) labour.”

“[...] crowdfunding repeats itself, first as arts, then as tragedy. But while doing so, it preserves the promotional language and entrepreneurial dynamics that characterise fundraising for art or innovation: things like ‘perks’, enforced social media bombardment, strategies borrowed from advertising, and, as Ian Bogost maintains, a semblance of the reality show.”

“Whether we position ourselves within the entrepreneurial discourse or the precarious one, the key word is *change*. Entrepreneurialism prescribes a bold attitude, and any hesitation is seen as cowardice. How can we change the collective vision of change? Perhaps it is here that the solution to the entrepreneurial impasse lies.”

From the afterword :

“Survivorship bias leads us to forget that we are not all Steve Jobs, and, just like Weber’s Protestants, we would need “infallible criteria by which membership in the *electi* could be known”. In the absence of these, we all just race towards the precipice like lemmings. But let us be reassured: our sacrifice will not be in vain. Again in Weber’s view, “Capitalism educates and selects the economic subjects — entrepreneurs and workers — which it needs”. If this selection has ended up producing the entrepreneurial, it is because the entrepreneurial was necessary.” (Raffaele Alberto Ventura)