

Authors and Agents



Supposedly, the artist ought to have some sort of special insight into the creative process: how art works, how it comes into being and what it means. But since Roland Barthes published his seminal essay, *The Death of the Author*, many have become skeptical about the artist's intention or interpretation of their own work. What kind of knowledge can an artist offer to the world, if any?

In this lecture, we explore the fascinating ideas about *authorship* in Barthes' essay – ideas that dismantle the long-held idea of 'artistic genius'. Here the artist is no longer seen to be the ultimate source of a work, or the all-knower of its meaning. But then, what *is* the artist's role?

As we traverse a brief history of ideas about authorship, from artists' reflexive practices, to nature's algorithms and creative artificial intelligence, we'll come to realise that the question of how contemporary artists conceive of their role today remains very much open - and that such questions can serve to fuel an inquisitive and exciting artistic practice.

Readings

- *The Hand, the Eye and It* - Hedwig Houben (video). 2013. [Link](#).
- *The Death of the Author* - Roland Barthes, 1967. [Link](#).