



**The Artist as Cultural Producer:
Living and Sustaining a Creative Life**
Edited by Sharon Louden
Intellect Books, \$42

THIS SEQUEL TO THE POPULAR book *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists* contains 40 wonderfully plainspoken stories of artistic life. Together, the first-person essays comprise a sort of accidental manual for finding a foothold and making a living while creating art that makes a difference

in the larger community. The essays are lightly edited, and some are overlong. But they have the charm of honest testimony by pioneers who could not have really been prepared for their journeys, the dogged trial and error of their work.

Artists whose focus is on process and interaction, rather than product, must hack their own paths. And thank heavens they do. As *Hyperallergic* editor in chief Hrag Vartanian writes

in the foreword, “Artists are our conscience; they are innovators, healers, chance-takers, and activists.” Our communities need these resourceful people, whether or not that is widely acknowledged.

Some creative people look at the market and ask, “What does it need?” Cultural producers, you could say, ask the same question of the cultural landscape – and set about trying to fill the need. ~MONICA MOSES