As the Creative City model for urban regeneration founders on the rocks of the recession, and the New Labour public art commissioning frenzy it triggered recedes, Anthony Iles and Josephine Berry Slater take stock of an era of highly instrumentalised public art making.

Focusing on artists and consultants who have engaged critically with the exclusionary politics of urban regeneration, their analysis locates such practice within a schematic history of urban development’s neoliberal mode. Breaking down into a report and a collection of interviews, this investigation consistently focuses on the forms and, indeed, possibility of critical public art within a regime that fetishes ‘creativity’ whilst systematically destroying its preconditions in its pursuit of capital accumulation. How, they ask, is critical art shaped by its interaction with this aspect of biopolitical governance?
“Artists have long been the shock troops of gentrification, but is there any chance of a mutiny? No Room To Move argues there is, featuring trenchant interviews with those who refuse to provide a grinning accompaniment to coffee concessions and wood-clad stunning developments. A boot aimed squarely at Richard Florida’s face.”

– Owen Hatherley, author of A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain

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Josephine Berry Slater is editor of Mute. She also teaches courses in the Culture Industry and Biopolitics and Aesthetics at Goldsmiths University. She is co-editor of Proud to Be Flesh: A Mute Magazine Anthology of Cultural Politics After the Net (2009).

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