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00.212, Philo II (Jakob-Welder-Weg 20)



Artists “Selling Out”: The Long History of an Idea (and the Short History of a Book)

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Ian Afflerbach is an Associate Professor of American Literature at the University of North Georgia. He teaches and researches in Modern American Fiction, periodical studies, African American literature, genre fiction, and the history of ideas. His work has appeared in journals like *PMLA*, *Modernism/modernity*, *ELH*, and *Studies in the Novel*, as well as public forums like *Public Books*, *The Conversation*, *Podcast Review*, and *The Bias*. He is author of *Making Liberalism New* (JHUP, 2021) and *Sellouts! The Story of an American Insult*, as well as co-editor of *Bad Art* (UGAP, 2027).

For a hundred and fifty years, “selling out” has been a corrosive insult to monitor group betrayal. In this talk, Prof. Afflerbach will discuss the changing ideas that American artists have had about “selling out,” from the anxieties about working for Hollywood studios in the 1930s to the debates over identity and misrepresentation in the publishing industry today.

This talk will not just provide an overview of one chapter from a book, however: it will also think about what “selling out” might mean for literary scholars today. Prof. Afflerbach will discuss his own experience shifting from traditional scholarship to public scholarship—the changes in style, and structure, required to make a book project accessible to a general audience.

A Q+A will follow in which we can discuss not just the contents of the book, but also the process of forming a larger writing project, building a platform for it, and thinking about our audience.



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