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# Can Consumers Escape the Market? Emancipatory Illuminations from Burning Man

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## Abstract

This ethnography explores the emancipatory dynamics of the Burning Man

project, a one-week-long antimarket event. Practices used at Burning Man to distance consumers from the market include discourses supporting communality and disparaging market logics, alternative exchange practices, and positioning consumption as self-expressive art. Findings reveal several communal practices that distance consumption from broader rhetorics of efficiency and rationality. Although Burning Man's participants materially support the market, they successfully construct a temporary hypercommunity from which to practice divergent social logics. Escape from the market, if possible at all, must be conceived of as similarly temporary and local.

**Keywords:** [Critical Theory](#), [Cultural Theories and Analysis](#), [Postmodernism/Poststructuralism](#), [Ethnography](#)

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