

# Hard-Branding the Cultural City – From Prado to Prada

GRAEME EVANS

If on arriving at Trude I had not read the city's name written in big letters, I would have thought I was landing at the same airport from which I had taken off. The downtown streets displayed the same goods, packages, signs that had not changed at all. I already knew the hotel where I happened to be lodged . . . The world is covered by a sole Trude, which does not begin and does not end. Only the name of the airport changes (*Invisible Cities*, Calvino, 1974: 102).

## Introduction

The designation of the cultural city and the use of the arts and entertainment as tools in urban regeneration is now a universal phenomenon which has accelerated in the era of the 'city of renewal'. The branding of commercial entertainment products and leisure-shopping together presents a synthesis of the physical and symbolic economies of urban consumption spaces which public culture has now emulated. Hard branding the city through cultural flagships and festivals has created a form of *Karaoke* architecture where it is not important how well you can sing, but that you do it with verve and gusto.

## Brand leaders

The extension of global leisure products and popular entertainment into city retail and public realms has been a familiar exploitation of the corporate brand and the 'fantasization' (Hannigan, 1998) of the everyday. The frequency and reach of this process has been fuelled by predictable competition and copycat corporate routines (following the brand leaders), but also by the growing recognition of the symbolic value ascribed to brand spinoffs and the intrinsic economic values they can possess, however long established in the product lifecycle (e.g. Coca Cola). Hard branding is therefore a specific attempt to capitalize on 'commodity fetishism' and extend brand life, geographically and symbolically. The transformation of essentially private consumer products into places of collective consumption and identity also extends the traditional lifestyle or image-based advertising associated with fashion and other consumer products, into an experiential and entertainment dimension which has been limited in the past to Disney and other cartoon characters (e.g. *Asterixland*, France) and Hollywood spin-offs (film/TV studios such as MGM, Universal and Granada). These themed entertainment centres have in the past tended to be located in out of town or urban fringe locations. However, the presence of Nike Town, Sony, SegaWorld, and Warner Studio 'Villages' (sic) and countless smaller brands in town and city centres, presents a challenge to mainstream entertainment venues, *edutainment* centre and museum alike, since they attract as many sightseers as shoppers. Since opening in Oxford Street, London in 1999, NikeTown has described itself as 'more than a store, to

us it is a place to come for inspiration, information, opportunities to play, first-class service and very best sports products'. Their physical form and brand reinforcement also make particular impacts on local distinctiveness and the urban landscape, and therefore represent an extreme example of the commodification of consumption spaces.

This particular manifestation of globalization is on the one hand the physical representation of product promotion and placement already transmitted through advertising, sponsorship and broadcast media, as well as a rational economic strategy to 'cut out the middle men' (general retailers) and reduce distribution and transaction costs. On the other hand it also presents an opportunity for enhancing customer loyalty and synergy between the physical and symbolic value of brands, but bypassing the political economy. It is the twin value systems of the political and symbolic economy that according to Zukin (1996: 43) provide the most productive analyses of the built environment of cities. However the branded entertainment-retail emporium challenges normal planning-use, design and vernacular preferences — is it a shop, a venue, an arcade, advertisement, public art or monument? Their prominence and scale thus accelerates the hard branding of cities already struggling to resist a(nother) McDonald's, Walmart, mall or multiplex, which are generally developed at the cost of existing, independent or at least more widely distributed outlets and town centres (e.g. cinemas, speciality retail stores and restaurants — Evans, 1998b). As Klein's manifesto *No Logo* observed: 'We live in a double world: carnival on the surface, consolidation underneath, where it counts. Everyone has ... witnessed the odd double vision of vast consumer choice coupled with Orwellian new restrictions on cultural production and public space. What Kunstler calls "the geography of nowhere"' (2001: 130, citing Kunstler, 1993).

Consumption in this case also requires that consumers visit and experience first hand the place, if not of production, then of distribution and display, much as the tourist does: 'Whereas the production sites of other industries are rarely magnets for visitors (except where retrofitted as historic or tourist sites), the actual fabrication of the entertainment product — and the themed stores and restaurants that give the visitor a vicarious feeling of participation in the creative process — become major attractions in themselves' (Sassen and Roost, 2000: 154). It is with tourism, therefore, that branded arts and entertainment shares common characteristics, since resorts and destinations have long been branded and pre-packaged. Indeed, as Dean MacCannell (1996) claimed, tourism is the cultural component of globalization, and cultural tourism in its various forms — heritage, arts, convention, trails (literature, films) — is increasingly an urban phenomenon (Evans, 1998a; Judd and Fainstein, 2000). The importance of major cities in international as well as domestic tourism should not, therefore, be understated. The city-states of New York and London receive enough tourists from other countries to place them amongst the top 12 *nations* for international arrivals (above Greece and Indonesia), visitor activity which is multiplied by domestic tourists as well as several hundred million leisure day visitors each year, and which is highly concentrated spatially (e.g. in hotel districts, tourist 'honeypots' — Evans, 2000).

The contemporary version of commodified cultural experience has resonance with earlier forms of entertainment and collective consumption, as rural gatherings and pursuits were recreated by entrepreneurs in towns and cities. Examples include the fair (today the festival, 'boot fair', to the World Fair and Universal EXPO); the pleasure garden (today's garden festival, theme park, open air concert); the circus (stadium, arena); and the music hall and its derivatives, the gin palace and early cinema. At the same time, theatre design and location had more in common with popular entertainment including bear baiting, bull fighting, open air shows, and a less conscious hierarchy of audiences between high brow and low brow, stalls and balcony. The imposition and control through licensing, censorship and enclosure which broke the visceral relationship between audience/participant and performer, ended the vibrant pleasure garden which was forced indoors, e.g. to music halls, and presents the other side to municipal urban entertainment — that of class divide and crowd control, and the promotion instead of 'dry' (alcohol free), educative cultural provision, manifested

particularly through museums and galleries, people's palaces, all-seater theatres and concert halls. The Great Exhibitions — notably in London, 1851 (and its French forerunners) — in their celebration and synthesis of industry, technology and fine art, are a particular milestone which accelerated the separation of the 'arts' and popular entertainment, and cemented the high art/popular culture dialectic: 'Ideologically the Great Exhibitions acted as a break point in both the narrative of museum history, and in the wider economies of material culture, presenting an opportunity for the new 'Products of Industry' to merge with art and entertainment in a previously unimaginable new leisure space' (Cummings and Lewandowska, 2000: 54). After the 1851 Great Exhibition, which attracted over 6 million visits to the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, attendance at the British Museum peaked at 2.5 million (today it receives 6 million, but over half of these are from overseas). The monuments and structures they and their modern contemporary — the Universal Expositions (EXPOs) — left behind, created such cultural icons as the Eiffel Tower (1859); the museum quarter, Kensington (1851, 1871–4, 1883–6); Kelvingrove, Glasgow (1901); and the Festival Hall and South Bank Arts complex (Festival of Britain 1951); as well as the ubiquitous twentieth century convention centres (Spokane, Knoxville USA; Brisbane; Vancouver). But in the late twentieth century they have also produced a series of less successful post-event facilities and under-developed sites, notably EXPOs in Montreal 1967, Seville 1992, Lisbon 1998, Greenwich Millennium 'Dome' and Hannover in 2000, as well as the British garden festivals which failed to capture either the regenerative effects or the spirit of their German originators, the post-war '*bundesgartenschauen*' (PACEC, 1990). Many parts of these urban sites remain undeveloped for decades, their public investment seldom recouped. Despite their track record, Japan plans to host the EXPO in 2005 at Aichi, themed around an Eco-City and a 'rediscovery of Nature's Wisdom'. Unlike the EXPO made up of temporary stands from participating countries, permanent multipurpose facilities will be integrated with long-term regional plans for subsequent use. This optimism is not, however, entirely misplaced — Japan had hosted the most successful EXPO in 1970 in Osaka (64 million visits) and in Tsukuba in 1985 (20 million), albeit in more stable times.

How far this current strategy of global arts and entertainment-led urban regeneration has paid off warrants consideration, not least due to the longevity of this blind faith approach and the many failures and redundant sites in the post-event stages of EXPOs, major sporting competitions and new cultural quarters. Their form and function — and form has followed funding, government and patron — also reflects the process of cultural commodification, resurgence of the city-region and a reaction perhaps to social atomization in urban society, including the controlled forms and places of popular entertainment and consumption. The 'city of renewal' therefore applies to cities old and new, large and small, and capital and provincial, which Hall (1992) locates in the fourth era of 'hallmark events' reigning for the past thirty years. This period corresponds with the urban regeneration regimes operating in post-industrial cities in North America and Europe, and more recently in developing countries and emerging world cities, particularly those with their colonial heritage intact (Evans, 2001b). Old world cities such as London, Paris and recently Berlin and Vienna have invested hugely in museum quarters and facilities, both new-build and conversions of industrial buildings, from railway and power stations to hospitals and palatial sites.

In Newark, New Jersey, for example, a 12-acre mixed-used redevelopment stretches from the Passaic River to Military Park as part of a master plan which links the city's 20-block downtown arts district with the city museum and library. The New Jersey Performing Arts Center, costing \$180 million is the flagship project which, it is hoped, will attract not only local residents, but visitors from New York and the surrounding suburbs. A 6,000-seat baseball stadium will complement this center, both linked to the main train station by a two-mile long \$75 million riverfront esplanade. This continuing embrace of the arts and urban regeneration has also reflected the failure of urban renewal programmes since the 1960s, where federal funds flowed into 'problem' cities, but where arguably this pattern contributed directly to the decay of urban core areas and

the rise of suburbia (Norquist, 1998). In a major retrospective exhibition, 'Building Culture Downtown: New Ways of Revitalizing the American City' held in Washington in 1998, several other projects were modelled and celebrated by their architects and city mayors ('champions'), who proclaimed that: 'now cities are capitalizing on their traditional assets — art and culture — to revive their downtowns. They are turning to museums, performing arts centers, theaters, opera houses, and concert halls to spur economic growth' (National Building Museum, 1998: 2). Presenting major development projects in San Jose (Silicon Valley), Fort Worth, Kansas, Cincinnati and Minneapolis: 'unlike the arts centers of the 1960s such as the Kennedy Center and New York's Lincoln Center, the architecture of the new cultural buildings is designed to reinforce connection to the city . . . not idealized monuments to culture, but street-savvy accessible buildings that often reflect the idiosyncrasies of their urban settings' (*ibid.*). In response to this boosterist promotional, some felt compelled to question these claims. A look at the visitor's book in this national exhibition suggested that these were not only exaggerated but that the local dimension was ignored — 'what about the local community'; 'culture-led regeneration projects have not benefited residents'; 'projects have created negative physical impacts in these 'po-mo' arts and entertainment zones' (cited in Evans, 2001a).

Notwithstanding the mixed response and resistance they engender, the creation of cultural flagships, architectural masterpieces and their (re)location in industrial districts, waterfronts and depopulated downtown areas, has arguably not been paralleled since the Victorian civic building and celebrations and those of earlier empires which begat the museum quarters and public realm — the squares, *beaux quartiers*, parks and monuments, emulated in renaissance Europe and colonial cities. Despite growing competition for the niche cultural and entertainment capital and all-year-round festival city status, cities have again embraced these politically and economically high-risk ventures. Not since the nineteenth century has architecture been used so consciously to promote civic or national pride. Cultural strategists and civic leaders now use the language of real estate agents to describe their potential as 'flagships', 'chesspieces', 'nodes', paralleling the 'anchor store' in shopping malls and the 'must-see' attraction on the tourist itinerary. Art centres, galleries and museums have also embraced industrial architecture and associations — art is *production* and *work* — Powerhouse, Gasworks, Leadmill, Printworks, Foundry and the Factory are all arts centre names, whether occupying former industrial buildings or not. Whilst public cultural facilities sought corporate support and in some cases branded facilities, e.g. the IMAX cinema, and museums were redesigned around retail and restaurant outlets as 'department stores of culture' (Harris, 1990), in contrast out of town shopping malls adopted pastoral names in an attempt to soften their concrete form and 'non-place', in Britain examples include Chester Oaks, Lakeside, Meadowhall, Merry Hill, Braehead, Bluewater Park and White Rose.

## City branding

Towns and cities have long been identified with major corporate headquarters, factories, or sporting venues and clubs, and particular producer associations, e.g. Silicon Valley, Motown, Nashville, Hollywood, 'Guinness World' Dublin, much as rural towns associate themselves with their agricultural produce and annual harvest festivals, but these are more marketing and civic imaging devices than wholesale city repositioning and place-making (Ward, 1998). Culture cities also seek to develop this association amongst visitor and resident, since, as Mommaas observes: 'Brands derive their attraction largely from the fact that they introduce a certain order or coherence to the multiform reality around us. Brands enable us more easily to 'read' each other and our environment of places and products . . . Seen in this way brands are not purely a source of differentiation, but also of identification, recognition, continuity and collectivity'

(2002: 34). According to Simmel, branding city quarters in the past provided a link between the diverging individual and collective culture and identity, reconnecting the locale with a sense of socio-cultural 'belonging', whether to a city, neighbourhood or nation. Increased mobility, wanderlust and search for new products and experiences were already apparent in the seventeenth century and, as Zukin maintains today:

the cultural power to create an image, to frame a vision, of the city has become more important as ... traditional institutions — both social classes and political parties — have become less relevant mechanisms of expressing identity. Those who create images stamp a collective identity. Whether they are media corporations like Disney, art museums, or politicians, they are creating new spaces for public cultures (1995: 3).

Cities seeking to be both inclusive and project their multicultural 'rich mix' (Worpole and Greenhalgh, 1999) now re-label their ethnic quarters which had come to be associated with deprivation and decline — Jewish ghettos and immigrant neighbourhoods such as Greektown, Little Germany and Little Italy (Taylor, 2000) — which are now branded through cultural association. Examples of these ethnoscapings (Appadurai, 1990;1997) include 'Banglatown', East London; 'Curry Triangle', Birmingham; and the ubiquitous Chinatowns. The latter are both recreated and multiplied such as in Toronto, or even used as a generic tag to indicate a bohemian quarter prior to regeneration such as the *Barrio Chinois* in the Raval area of Barcelona, which never actually hosted a Chinese community. To have the largest Chinese quarter is now a claim for which cities such as Manchester and Vancouver now compete.

Despite their global reach and ubiquity, the extent to which branded urban entertainment centres can develop and sustain an identity and image for a city, as they create for an otherwise placeless self-created theme park, is less apparent. Associating a place with a cultural icon is, on the other hand, an attempt to imbue a place with a creative character, one that civic and tourist boards have appropriated in the case of Mackintosh's Glasgow, Gaudi's Barcelona, Hockney's Bradford and Lowry's Salford, and now Guggenheim Bilbao, a practice common in the case of literary figures, real or fictional, from Sherlock Holmes' Baker Street, London, and Zola's Paris to Steinbeck's Cannery Row, Monterey. The danger of brand decay is already evident in the case of Glasgow ('European City of Culture' in 1990). The emblematic Mackintosh designs feature in jewellery, repro furniture, city logos and souvenirs, reaching a peak in 1999 when the city celebrated The Year of Architecture and Design, centred on the flagship Charles Rennie Mackintosh *Glasgow Herald* building, converted into Scotland's first architecture centre. Since then, the renowned Glasgow School of Art has changed its logo and lettering from the archetypal Mackintosh design as forward-looking organizations distance themselves from a now heritage brand and its inauthentic reproductions of *Mocintosh*. The same process may befall Barcelona, now 'Gaudi city' and even Guggenheim Bilbao (below), as the single image and brand loses its impact and novelty, and a more pluralist range of representations is required.

Brand competition and the price of maintaining visibility in a fickle market also ensures that a single, dominant product or experience is likely to be diluted, so that Nike Town and Sega World may form part of a city's retail and tourism offer, anchoring a downtown zone or entertainment complex, but limited to their youth markets they are unlikely to achieve brand identity to sustain or create cultural city status, or substitute for public culture. For instance, the product logo has less value and impact on a city-break brochure, tourist or festival guide, TV advert or t-shirt, than the cultural icons and stereotypical skylines that form the basis of city marketing and place-making campaigns. Logos have been used at least since Ancient Greece as a form of shorthand that communicates specific information using a minimum of visual support, to refine and condense a range of complex, even disparate meanings and knowledge in one integrated symbolic image (Lip, 1995). However, despite, or rather because of, the power of commercial brands, their universality ensures their placelessness. Where logos are created to celebrate public events — often anthropomorphic, universal characters rather than abstract symbols used for product branding e.g. Nike's 'swoosh',

McDonald's golden arch — and which serve as ephemeral mascots and souvenirs of Olympic Games, Expos and Millennium festivals, their shelf-life and appeal is limited. Even international symbols of universal quality associated with designated World Heritage Sites (afforded the UNESCO symbol and logo) have less impact than national heritage recognition and images of the cultural sites themselves (Evans, 2002a).

The urban site, notwithstanding deurbanization and spatial divides in cultural amenity (Borja and Castells, 1997), has arguably started to show signs of its earlier condition, where 'new consumption practices were closely linked to particular kinds of urban settings, rather than to mass production, and indeed were associated with the revival of the notion of urbanism as a distinct *way of life* embracing consumption, architecture and the leisure skills' (Kearns and Philo, 1993: 35). The popularity of open-air and park-based events and entertainment, animated street life, rave and club culture and the return of the *flâneur* in open and street markets and malls, provide antidotes, even resistance (Foucault, 1990: 95–6), to the darkened and regimented nature of mono-use indoor cultural venues. However, these popular sub/cultural activities often exist in interstitial locations or quickly experience commodification, such as community and ethnic festivals (e.g. carnival) and markets. The multiplex has been a modern example of this spatial commodification, replacing smaller, local cinemas with large multi-screen sheds. As Sennett experienced during a cinema visit to an outer New York shopping mall: 'If a theatre in a suburban mall is a meeting place for tasting violent pleasure in air-conditioned comfort, this great geographic shift of people into fragmented spaces has had a larger effect in weakening the sense of tactile reality and pacifying the body' (1994: 17). Another form of branding which has reinforced the dominance of major studios and production companies in film distribution, multiplexes were at first located largely out of town, in cheaper land sites such as urban fringe and motorway interchanges, and as a key presence in shopping malls. However, their development in town centres has in part been driven by saturation and signs of audience decline (due in the US and UK to a fall in youth demographics), but also planning regulation which has sought to constrain and reverse the out of town and edge city drift, and the environmental consequences of a predominantly car-borne visitor. The geographic distribution of the ongoing multiplex phenomenon also reveals the formulaic response of property developers, which is evident in a review of leisure developments in Britain (Table 1). The return to town and edge of centre locations is clear, however the ubiquitous multiplex features in over 50% of all leisure projects, both stand alone, but more often as part of retail and branded sports complexes.

The closure of traditional town centre cinemas is also being reinforced by landowners/operators who are imposing restrictive covenants forbidding their use as cinemas by subsequent owners and potential competitors. In a response to the closure of smaller cinemas in France, prior to the opening of a 17-screen, 3,000-seat *Megarama* on the outskirts of Paris, the French Cultural Minister announced plans to increase subsidies to small town-centre cinemas and hastily passed legislation limiting new multiplexes to 2,000 seats (Evans, 2001a). In a more liberal planning regime, where city regeneration has overridden most other considerations, *StarCity* in Birmingham, West Midlands, is designed around a 30-screen Warner Village cinema, making it one of the largest in Europe. With a possible oversupply in screens and a drop in cinema attendance, multiplexes are also beginning to adopt more diverse programming, including arthouse films and in multicultural areas such as Birmingham and London, dedicating several screens to Asian and *Bollywood* movies. Their impact on the urban morphology of edge cities and town centres is, however, significant. Vast sheds that serve people from more than one city or conurbation demonstrate that urbanism has already become an amorphous landscape in which mobility allows anything to happen anywhere (Sudjic, 1993). Retail-leisure centres have also introduced the multiplex for the first time in countries such as Sweden, where Heron City, a chain of branded entertainment-led destinations, opened its second centre in Stockholm in 2001 (the first was in Madrid). Combining cinema with a health and sports club, family entertainment centre, food court, retail, restaurant/fast food outlets, this centre is located next to an

**Table 1** Major leisure developments and their locations, 1996-98

Development Type	Town Centre	Edge-of-Centre	Out-of-Centre	Out-of-Town	District/Unknown	Total
Mixed leisure including a multiplex	22	19	10	3	1	55
Multiplex	15	8	9	5	0	37
Multiplex with retail	5	3	2	0	0	10
Multiplex with sport	1	2	2	1	0	6
Leisure centre/pool	3	6	9	3	3	24
10 pin bowling	3	0	1	0	0	4
Health/Gym	5	3	5	3	0	16
Arena/Stadium	0	2	3	6	0	11
Bingo	1	2	3	0	0	6
Night-club	1	0	2	0	0	3
Theatre/Cinema	3	0	1	0	0	4
Total	76	49	58	24	6	213

Source: LPA Survey (n = 180) in Evans and Shaw (2001)

IKEA store which receives 5 million visitors a year. Heron City Stockholm forecasts 3 million visitors to: 'the first development which is a 'global brand', reflecting the unique characteristics of the locality through its design image ... enforcing the global trend we are witnessing of retail and leisure developments which represent local community destinations'. Such doublespeak would do the planners of *Metropolis* proud — Heron International (a British plc) plans Heron City's for Barcelona, Valencia, Santa Cruz in Spain; Lille, Milan, Brussels and Lisbon.

How the cosmopolitan city and metropolitan region responds to the branding and synchronization of commerce and consumer culture and the realities of their multicultural societies, can in part be measured by its public culture and urban planning. In many countries, including developing nations (Landry, 1998), cultural policy has now become an instrument in the restructuring of cities and urban areas, so that: 'today the tasks of city planning also include compensating for differences and creating necessary community in order to allow the city to function at all. If inhomogeneity becomes visible, if the idea of the homogenous national or city culture is no longer tenable, then the city, the urban space, becomes important' (Ellmeier and Rasky, 1998: 80). New approaches also seek to integrate cultural policy and urban regeneration, since, according to Worpole and Greenhalgh: 'Any form of urban planning is today, by definition, a form of cultural planning in its broadest sense, as it cannot but take into account people's religious and linguistic identities, their cultural institutions and lifestyles, their modes of behaviour and aspirations, and the contribution they make to the urban tapestry' (1999: 4). How far branding the culture city emulates commercial entertainment and product encroachment into the urban landscape and public realm is therefore a test both of governance, and of the 'go global: stay local' strategies that look to culture-led regeneration and the celebration of diversity alongside cultural monuments, heritage and the traditions which cities in particular have claimed in reinforcing citizen identity and distinctiveness. Lee refers to this tradition as a 'habitus of location', in which he suggests that cities have enduring cultural orientations which exist and function relatively independently of their current populations or of the numerous social processes at any particular time: 'In this sense we can describe a city as having a certain cultural character ... which clearly transcends the popular representations of the populations of certain cities, or that manifestly expressed by a city's public and private institutions' (1997: 132). If there is

something symbolic, even metaphysical at play, commercial and competitive city cultural branding may produce uneven, unpredictable results. How the morphology of a city evolves and absorbs its changing function and community also begs questions around cultural hybridity and diversity, and the important distinction between heritage and tradition. Marx, for instance, distinguished between ‘heritage’, which he saw as encompassing all historic and style periods, all social formations without exception, from that of ‘tradition’, which he saw as only a component of the former, the ‘wealth of ideas consolidated in the public mind, which requires a choice, acceptance and interpretation of the heritage from the point of view of certain classes, social layers and groups’ (Andra, 1987: 156). Conflicts caused through the hegemonic process of selection, choice, re-evaluation and cultural change, therefore, arise where city branding and cultural projects reinforce a homogenous culture, or what Horne termed ‘a fabricated public culture that purports to be the culture not only of the rulers, but of all the people’ (1996: 184). Prime examples are the *Grands Projets* which have featured and multiplied in the latter twentieth century, and the modernist and postmodern culture houses and convergence apparent in the design and theming of cultural place and space. This raises the question of whether hard branding the culture city in practice has emulated the product branding of entertainment, retail and experience economies, or whether public cultural projects successfully counter the commodified entertainment zones with whom they now jostle for attention in former industrial, waterfront and downtown space.

## **Grands Projets**

Prior to the post-industrial culture city and regeneration phenomenon which gained force in the late 1980s, Tuan observed that: ‘Past events make no impact on the present unless they are memorialized in history books, monuments, pageants, and solemn and jovial festivities . . . on which successive citizens can draw to sustain and re-create their image of place’ (1977: 174). As the *fin de siècle* also passed into the new Millennium in a self-conscious frenzy of cultural events and buildings, two iconic manifestations of what is a primarily urban cultural renaissance and the most visible examples of public culture, are the contemporary mega-events and the monumental *Grands Travaux*. In particular, the post-War *Grands Projets Culturels* associated with presidential ‘megalomaniacs’ Pompidou and Mitterand, which have been mirrored in provincial French cities and also francophone Québec (Laperrière and Latouche, 1996). The *Grands Projets* are in many respects a particular French affair although they follow the tradition of the celebration of monarchical glory which saw the first art galleries and museums open to the public. The Louvre, for instance, was built as a palace for the Royal family (and, like in Berlin, its picture galleries had already been opened to the public), but within ten days of the French Revolution it was declared a ‘public museum’. Two hundred years on, the *Centre national d’art et de culture* on the plateau Beaubourg was launched shortly after Georges Pompidou’s election, and rechristened the ‘Centre Pompidou’ after his death in 1974: ‘the Pompidou Centre was decided against all planning authorities, whose discourse or speech was ‘no more institutions’ and ‘no more Paris institutions’. Nevertheless, Pompidou decided to go ahead’ (Girard, 1987: 10). A similar decision was taken by President Mitterrand over the Opéra Bastille, ‘which related either to an historical tradition or an intuition, or vision, of the monarch, (which) could not by definition be rational’ (*ibid.*). The French system is said to be a ‘cultural monarchy’, ‘where he pleases, the minister in office defines his options and takes his decisions in the fashion of a sovereign, according to the principles of “enlightened despotism”’ (Wangermée, 1991: 35). The Louvre was the first of Mitterrand’s *Grands Projets* (to match Pompidou), and with the Opéra-Bastille, La Défense, and Bibliothèque nationale, was the most extensive public building programme in Paris since Haussmann’s new city layout of the 1870s.

What many of these *Grands Projets* and other national equivalents also have in common, is an exorbitant cost, often turning out to be overdue and overbudget (some overrunning by over 100%), and a defiance of public planning and choice. Over £3 billion in capital investment has been made in Paris with over 600 provincial *Grands Travaux* projects costing in excess of a declared £200 million, and by now these totals have been exceeded by ongoing and additional spending, such as the final phase of the *Grand Louvre* project. Despite their financial burden and uncertain impact, Mitterand used these *Grands Projets* to ‘rally behind a certain idea of the city’ (1989: 5). In particular to reconcile what he saw as the divorce of architecture from town planning which had given rise to two undesirable urban phenomenon: tower blocks and as a reaction to this, ‘dispersion’. According to Scalbert, however, these projects have actually reinforced the centre-periphery divide: ‘whatever their value as architectural set-pieces, they are not the much-vaunted harbingers of a proclaimed urban renaissance. On the contrary, like circus games, they direct attention from the inexorable erosion of Paris and the brutal neglect of its suburbs (1994: 20). It was hoped that the scale and prestige of the *Grands Projets* and related infrastructure such as transport would act as exemplars of civic renewal and by example encourage local authorities to emulate them. Nevertheless, by 1985 the so-called decentralized cultural budget had gone down by 50%, and of the national culture budget the Paris flagship projects took 58%, leaving the provinces only 31% (compared with 40% in 1981). *Grands Projets* here as elsewhere were established primarily to enhance national international prestige and in this case Paris’ tarnished image as cultural capital of the world (Looseley, 1997: 139), a rationale and formula now replicated in capital cities, and in regional capitals that seek both autonomy from the centre and international recognition in order to compete in global economic activity (Castells, 1989; 1996). What the *Grands Projets* have engendered, therefore, is a response from regional cities and an international competition which is now played out amongst the major cultural institutions in which power has been invested to both maintain and improve their culture city ranking. This is not limited to their city hosts, but major museums, galleries, performing art houses and their star directors and performers, are now fêted by other cities, as culture becomes footloose, much the same as post-Fordist industry and major league sports teams are tempted by new facilities, corporate sponsorship and investment incentives. Their local and regional identity and loyalty is thus challenged when the historic connection between place and tradition is ultimately broken. Even where regional cultural development has been supported by the centre, in Europe often aided by Regional Development funding (Evans and Foord, 2000), and where national cultural policies stress decentralization and devolution, in France, for instance, this was ‘accompanied by an inverse tendency to recruit those with specialist talents and abilities from national level, often [the capital] Paris’ (Negrier, 1993: 142). The development of new art centres as ‘multiples’ or satellites from the capital city has been another mechanism of regional development, particularly in the more centralized states of Europe, whilst maintaining control of collections and resources at the centre — for example the Tate, V&A, Getty and Guggenheim ‘families’ of galleries and loan/touring schemes from national museums and galleries.

## Hard branding the European city of culture

Whilst the culture city has been imagined and engineered as a representation of city, region and national identity, sometimes consonant across these levels, sometimes in opposition (i.e. seeking regional or ethnic autonomy and decentralization), the notion of European common cultural heritage has added a supra-national dimension. European Union (EU) cultural policy and development has until recently been subsumed into various regional development and common market (free trade) instruments. However, the promotion of European Cities of Culture and the investment of substantial regional

development aid into cultural projects has acted as an effective ‘Trojan horse’ by which structural economic adjustment policies and funding have been diverted into arts-led regeneration and rural development (through crafts, heritage and tourism based projects), generally bypassing national and even city cultural and economic development policy and preferences (Evans and Foord, 2000). The use of culture as a conduit for the branding of the ‘European Project’ has added fuel to culture city competition, whilst at the same time celebrating an official version of the European urban renaissance. The brand in this case is manifested by the EU logo and packaged as the European culture city-break and contemporary Grand Tour (Evans, 1998a).

Many of the European case studies and exemplars of the urban renaissance have thus been enabled by European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) — notably Spain’s ‘big year’ of 1992: Barcelona (Olympics), Madrid (City of Culture) and Seville (EXPO); the industrial heartlands of the UK, Ireland (north and south) and more recently Scandinavian peripheral regions. The *European City of Culture* competition was conceived at a time when the city was again perceived (politically by the ‘urban new left’) as a place of culture, style and artistic excellence and when industrial production had declined both economically and symbolically. The scheme was proposed by the Greek culture minister in 1984 and the following year Athens was selected, followed by Florence in 1986. Fourteen European cities hosted annual cities of culture festivals, which were used to shoe-horn new and upgraded cultural facilities (e.g. the makeover of the Prado Museum in Madrid 1992) and re-package their cultural itineraries. In the millennium year with growing pressure from cities seeking culture city status, nine cities were selected which included for the first time, the east European cities of Prague, Krakow as well as non-EU member Reykjavik. This signalled not only the extension of the European project east and north, but the aspiration of former soviet bloc countries to participate in the network of culture cities and, by definition, regain their place in the European Renaissance. Despite its lack of novelty and crowded membership, the city of culture concept has also been adopted across the Atlantic where a competition for *Cultural City of the Americas* saw Merida, capital of the Yucatan province in Mexico, host the first festival in 2000.

Helsinki also shared Capital of Culture designation in this year. The city has embraced the cultural industries and arts flagship strategy, which includes developing a cultural production zone centred on the Cable Factory and music conservatoire, and cultural consumption quarter around the Glass Media Palace. This ‘Palace’ — a row of shopfronts and cafes backed by a central coach station — was an inheritance from the ill-fated 1930s Olympic Games, converted to an art house cinema, art book shops, cafes and media production facilities to form part of a cultural triangle with the new museum of contemporary art, a multiplex cinema and a planned tennis palace museum (Verwijnen and Lehtovuori, 1999: 219). The obligatory contemporary art museum, *Kiasma* (‘a crossing or exchange’), designed by American architect Steven Holl and like Guggenheim-Bilbao, hosting a private, imported collection, ‘seeks to redefine the art museum as an institution, shifting from the image of elitist treasure house to public meeting place’. This new curved asymmetric building includes a ground floor cafe which spills out into the outdoor space, with its fountain, lawn and hardscape, a formula now familiar in the design of the modern office and shopping mall. Like its type, most visitors are not likely to venture further than the café culture and book shop. This downtown location is at the southern end of an under-used tract of land which Alvar Aalto had masterplanned forty years ago with a series of public terraces and cultural institutions lining the west shore of Töölö Bay. Only the Finlandia Hall complex was completed, however, leaving this white concert hall stranded and somewhat sterile, a fate that the South Bank and Barbican Arts Centre complexes in London; the Lincoln Center, New York and other art centre and museum ‘islands’ also seem to suffer, requiring costly makeovers and retrofitting schemes, such as the Pompidou, Paris (below). The location, design and grand scale of these arts complexes and their concrete form, more often create wind tunnels, little safe shelter and interstitial spaces that can make them uninviting outside of their evening, electronically lit transformation. Neither

community spaces, nor agoras, it is perhaps no surprise that these cultural monoliths attract rough sleepers, skateboarders, graffiti artists who subvert these 'public' spaces. In Vienna, also the subject of a major city centre cultural development project, the solution has been suitably imperial. The *MuseumsQuartier*, which opened in 2001, claims to be one of the ten largest cultural districts in the world. Occupying the former Imperial stables behind the Museums of the History of Arts and Natural History, nearly 20 separate arts organizations will be located in this artificial cultural industries quarter, which is expected to 'attract tourists and make money, a cultural centre for the neighbouring district and give new creative impulses to the city', in the words of the scheme's project manager, a 'Shopping Mall for Culture' ([www.museumsquartier.at](http://www.museumsquartier.at)). Private and public art museums and collections have been relocated inside the wall of the Imperial Stables, creating an odd juxtaposition of modernist gallery cubes within a heritage structure, but with little evident reference either to one another, or to the historic site itself. Vienna had, of course, undergone 'Haussmanization' in the mid-1800s, razing its fortifications and replacing this space in the *Grand Manner*.

The bidding process for the renamed European *Capital City of Culture* parallels the build up and optimism surrounding Olympic, EXPO and major event competitions driven by geopolitics, commercial sponsorship and the high risk associated with aspiring culture cities which lack the scale, image and infrastructure necessary to achieve success. This winners and multiple losers game has created a growing tier of peripheral and regional cities that repeatedly enter such competitions and justify major public investment in new venues and transport in terms of the regenerative benefits of branding that will accrue. Cities such as Manchester and Toronto have staked the regeneration of major sites on such failed bids (Olympics), often despite popular resistance, whilst others have been burdened by the financing and failure associated with undeveloped post-event sites, in some cases long after they occurred (e.g. Montreal 1967 EXPO and 1976 Olympics: an ongoing extra tax on cigarettes; Sheffield 1991 Student Games: closure of local and community sports and leisure facilities, higher entry fees for new facilities — Evans, 1998b). As in the *Grands Projets* in Paris, these cultural flagships have in practice crowded out provision in other parts of the city, and in other regions, and substituted a particular version of culture — the heritage and monumental art museum and performing arts and sports complex — for contemporary cultural activities and facilities which reflect more diverse, contemporary and participatory arts and entertainment activity.

For example, in the Castilla-Leon autonomous region of Spain, an eligible ERDF area with a population of 2.5 million, cultural spending increased by 63% or 5% a year from the mid-1980s to 1997. This, however, masked a major redirection of the type of culture receiving public funding, which was directly influenced by the European regional funding regime and the promotion of a type of 'common heritage' and identity by the higher level regional government, in contrast to local district councils. Between 1985 and 1997 spending on heritage, museums and historic projects increased from 59% to 82% of the overall cultural budget, including the funding of two new museums in Leon and Zamora, whilst spending on community cultural activities ('cultural diffusion' — performance, festivals, small-scale arts projects) decreased from 41% to 18% (Devesa, 1999: 9). Cultural development in this scenario therefore suffers where the diversity and aspirations of local areas are de-prioritized and therefore where local cultural development is not reconciled with regional planning. This is reflected in the nature of arts activities and venues, as is evident in Barcelona which has continually reinvested in its cultural and urban infrastructure since the early 1990s. Here a cosmopolitan city attracting overseas as well as Spanish visitors (now more 'leisure' than 'business'), pursues an international cultural agenda, whilst the Catalan regional government, and conduit for European and other regional assistance, pursues a Catalonian identity and cultural policy — promoting the Catalan language for instance in drama and literature, a condition of regional grant aid (75% of theatrical productions, including musicals, are required to be in Catalan). Many Barcelona theatres and artists, on the other hand, prefer Spanish and/or English language work, not surprising given

the larger market for their work, resulting in much dance, mime and physical drama and musical theatre in the city, but from over twenty theatres in 1950 by the mid-1990s Barcelona supported only four. As Balibrea observes: 'This superimposition of modern nationalism onto a post-industrial economy and a postmodern cultural logic does not always produce the harmonious convergence of interests' (2001: 196). A similar scenario preceded the construction of the Guggenheim art museum in Bilbao (below). Shortly before the competition for the design was awarded by the government, they had turned down the funding for a Basque Cultural Centre in the centre of the city, and subsequently reduced its subsidies to a broad range of cultural groups in the region (Baniotopoulou, 2000; Gomez and Gonzalez, 2001).

Tuan had also observed 25 years ago that: 'the civic leaders of the new cities and modern city-states were required to speak with a *loud* voice. Strident boosterism was the technique to create an impressive image with munificence such as large-scale public works and the subsidization of art, and where symbolic means had to be used to make the large-nation state seem a concrete place' (1977: 174). This is no longer confined to the 'new' cities, those emerging from economic or political decline, but established regional and capital cities are required to make a change to their image (e.g. Glasgow's *[S]Miles Better* campaign) and their industrial base, in order to prevent further job and population loss arising from structural employment and industrial change. In the case of world and large cities, their status nationally is challenged by regional centres and autonomy and internationally from tourism and convention trade and the projection of 'quality of life' — all manifested through a cultural branding which attempts to reconcile leisure, business and community demands and aspirations, in a competitive environment. Key factors to the success of European cities therefore include 'a high quality environment — built, public open space and urban life' (Gospodni, 2002: 60; and see CEC, 1992; Jensen-Butler *et al.*, 1997). The environmental factor in securing economic prosperity, inward investment and urban (re)settlement places culture alongside traditional urban infrastructure and amenities such as transport and housing. Myerscough had discovered this in his study of the *Economic Importance of the Arts in Great Britain* (1988) — that cultural facilities and urban quality were valued highly in employer location preferences. Moreover, the cultural industries and the visitor economy not only offer comparative advantage for economic development generally, but present a growing economic sector in their own right. The proportion of national employment and GDP represented by the arts and cultural industries now accounts for 5% to 10% of western economies (more if related tourism and hospitality is included), and this is disproportionately higher in major cities which dominate certain cultural production, media and national art institutional activity such as museums, broadcasting — from 50% to 80% of national employment, particularly in design, audio-visual and the visual arts (Scott, 2000; Evans, 2001a). What Zukin refers to as the 'artistic mode of production' (2001) is now a dominant or sought after post-industrial form, whilst the imperative for aesthetic distinction, style and the designer label led Lash and Urry to argue that today 'all industrial production, being design-intensive, is increasingly similar to cultural production' (1994, cited in McGuigan, 1996: 88).

The environmental and employment benefits attributed to urban culture therefore offer an irresistible cocktail which politicians, cultural producers, but less so private investors, seem unable to resist. However, this is counterfactual in light of the evidence of major cultural flagship projects and their proximity to and relationship with the creative industries themselves. Where property-led development and gentrification follows these major sites, they are often at the cost of workspace and artists studios, or else the creation of production activity in these new cultural quarters is effectively priced out of the reach of the small enterprises that make up over 90% of cultural firms. Clusters of creative activity, the neo-Bohemian quarters of culture cities, tend to emerge from less developed and cheaper locations, until regeneration, often incorporating larger arts institutions and facilities, effectively drives them out (Evans, 2003), as the tale of *Loft Living* and the recent MoMA makeover in Manhattan reveal (below). This pattern is repeated from Bankside (Tate Modern) and Hoxton, East London, to Berlin.

There is as yet little or no significant and sustainable link between the creative industries and the *grands projets culturels*, notwithstanding the regenerative and trickle-down claims of their developers. To what direction these architectural and cultural monuments look is also hard to judge. However, it is difficult to ignore their historic and classical associations and aspirations, whether civic, monarchic or nationalistic in origin, since most of these symbols of our new era would have been as intelligible to a top-hatted or crinolined Victorian as they are to today's trainers-wearing masses (Stungo, 2000). The first examples of civic cultural facilities which pre-dated the municipal museum, library, and theatre, in Hobsbawm's view lacked either a democratic or economic rationale 'Secular public authorities were almost the only customers for those gigantic and monumental buildings whose purpose was to testify to the wealth and splendour of the age in general and the city in particular' (1977: 329). Popular acceptance, access and economic multipliers distinguish the present day versions, whilst still fulfilling their role as a symbol of the civilized culture city, if no longer one of *national* identity.

## Form or function

To understand the design and purpose of contemporary art museums, cultural complexes and *theseums* (Batten, 1993), and their place in the urban landscape, a comment on their foundation provides some clues to both their form and function today. This also brings to the fore the key actors usually present in their often complex and contested formation — curators (art directors and their boards), foundations (and patron collectors), architects and politicians — from presidents to parochial councillors. The role of architects in the monumental buildings erected to house private collections of monarch, aristocrat and merchant, has been one of client control, but today the pinnacle in the jobbing *arkitecton's* (masterbuilder) career, is the public monument — the museum. As Richard Meier, who designed the Getty Museum at Malibu and MACBA Barcelona, revealed: 'if I could choose the one building type that I preferred to do the rest of my life it would be Museums. Besides the display of the actual art objects in the design of museums, the architecture has to deal with a set of fascinating relationships: the civic grandeur, the public experience, the relationship of the individual viewer to the individual object, as well as the relationship of the art and the space to the general surroundings' (Blaser, 1990: 8). The branded art museums also stress their role as universal sites and public meeting places: 'an international landmark' claims the Guggenheim in Bilbao; whilst the Getty which also opened in the autumn of 1997 was 'a crossroads for families neighbors, scholars and students, tourists and teachers. It's a place for fun and reflection, overlooking one of the world's most exciting cities' (cited in Boniface, 1998: 29).

Their aptly named 'star architects' are now fêted even though they represent a tiny proportion of architectural practice and prosaic building types. The architect who manifested God's glory on earth (the cathedral, temple), and the royal designer (e.g. Schinkel's neoclassical Altes and Neues museums in Berlin), has evolved via that of architect-developer (e.g. Wren and Nash in London), to the masterplanner and now the secular architect whose signature brand is sought globally. Rogers (Pompidou), Gehry (Guggenheims, Disney Museum, EMP Seattle), Meier (Getty, MACBA), Libeskind (V&A, Imperial War Museum, Jewish Museum Berlin), Koolhaas (MoMA, Guggenheim) and I.M.Pei (Louvre) start this international roll call, which is now extended by national and regional design names. Brazil has its own signature modernist architect, Oscar Niemeyer. His Museum of the Founding of Brasilia, the ultimate *new city* and World Heritage Site, could be mistaken for a mausoleum, located underground with no provision for interpretation in a bland space. His recent new art gallery in Niteroi emulates a flying saucer with curved walls and no clear divide between floor and walls — a curator's nightmare. A visually spectacular landmark overlooking the

bay towards Rio, it is nonetheless located in a monotonous public and inaccessible space. As in the exemplar of culture-led regeneration, Barcelona: 'The presence, and convenient marketing of work in the city by Foster, Meier ... Calatrava ... Miralles *et al.* intensifies the aesthetic signification of these [cultural facilities], turning them by the same token into privileged signifiers of a 'designer city' ' (Balibrea, 2001: 192).

The first public museums were princely picture galleries and cabinets of curiosities often opened by their patrons during the Enlightenment period. The British Museum originated from three private collections, including John Soane's which was sold to the nation by his heirs. They served learned gentlemen rather than all-coming visitors until the mid nineteenth century when a wider public was encouraged in an evolving era of scientific objectivism, as the range of pillaged and colonial artefacts grew in western cities. The notion of a safe, well-lit warehouse emerged (Markus, 1993), familiar today in the neutral space for displaying contemporary art and touring exhibitions — artistic or trade. It was the positivism of the High Modern Movement which by the mid-twentieth century became the dominant form, still revered and referred to in today's art museums. Corbusier's *Musée à Croissance Illimitée* (1939) and Wright's Guggenheim in New York epitomized this style. What they also symbolized is the modern cultural building as an architectural monument first and a functional gallery second. The Guggenheim required the visitor to take a lift to the top and walk down a spiral ramp past the pictures, making it difficult to go back (and therefore presenting a fixed sequence of pictures) and the downward slope jarred with the vertically hung art. Mumford called the Guggenheim 'a procrustean structure ... short of insisting that no pictures at all be shown. Wright could not have gone much further to create a structure sublime in its own right but ridiculous as a museum for art' (1959). But the public flocked to the building 'anticipating the day when museums would operate as agoras for hanging out as much as for hanging art' (Iovine, 1999: 5). In a Gallup poll a year after it opened, nearly 40% of visitors came just to see the building, while only 5% came just to see the collection (Stern *et al.*, 1995). Wright was also concerned about copycat designs, but within 3 months of opening, the Daitch-Shopwell chain introduced a circular supermarket with a seven storey ramp. Signature architecture therefore runs the risk of emulation and inevitably, hard-branding. Copycat design and regeneration concepts are now commonplace — the Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona was overtly modelled on the Pompidou Centre, Paris as the 'Beauborg of Barcelona' (Balibrea, 2001: 198).

The architectural significance of the first Guggenheim was reinforced by the location of other museums in what became known as the 'museum mile', encroaching into Central Park itself, and a twentieth century example of a cultural quarter to counterbalance the museum islands such as London's cluster of national institutions inherited from the Great Exhibitions (above) and also located next to one of the city's large open spaces, Hyde ('Royal') Park. The location of museums and galleries within major city parks is one that links their dual recreational nature, and also reinforces the privileged zones of the city. These central parks are often located in the well-heeled residential, office and shopping districts, and placing major museums there also enhances their symbolic and land value. Examples include Rotterdam's museum park; Mexico City's Chapultepc Park which contains over eight museums; Sao Paulo's museums of Modern Art, Folklore and Aeronautics in parque do Ibrapuera; Barcelona's Montjuic Park housing the Ethnological and Archaeological museums, the Art Museum of Catalonia and Joan Miró museums; the Cité Science in Parc de La Villette, Paris and the Burrell and Kelvingrove in Glasgow.

One of the first major cultural facilities to be deliberately located in a less prestigious city district was the Pompidou in Paris. The preference for form and architectural impact over function was evident early on: 'Although ... iconic and provides Paris with a new landmark, it has proved like Wright's Guggenheim or van der Rohe's Neie gallery in Berlin, less of a success as far as the display of art is concerned' (Schubert, 2000: 60). Open plan layout and free standing temporary walls made it almost impossible to show sculpture and painting satisfactorily. Part of the problem was due to

its huge success with the public — the number of visitors was twice as high as the most optimistic forecasts, with the building looking more like a busy airport than an art museum. Its high maintenance structure and usage meant that a major overhaul was required after only eight years, with more conventional, solid galleries created (the original high-tech features, such as electronic signage, movable floors were dropped from Rogers' original 'Times Square' museum concept). Whilst the Pompidou Centre, re-emerging from a £55 million second refurbishment has undoubtedly impacted on the Place Beaubourg and is likely to continue fulfilling its symbolic and touristic role, its artistic/functional purpose is less valid since less than 20% of its 25,000 daily visitors actually entered the 'art museum' facilities themselves, preferring to just meet, hang-out and walk-through. The Pompidou, like so many public art centres and museums, serves in large part as a culturally legitimated amusement park and culture cafe (Heinich, 1988). Their proponents and city sponsors argue that this is one step to the democratization of culture, that the casual visitor may in time be encouraged to enter the institution proper (on reopening, the Centre's President lowered the gallery entry fee but introduced charges for 'freeriders' use of the popular outside escalators). Willis, on the other hand, sees that: 'the new temples of High Art ... may enjoy some corporate popularity, but as a public spectacle not private passion, as places to be seen rather than to be in. The prestige flagships are in reality no more than aesthetic ironclads heaving against the growing swell of Common Culture. Let's follow the swell' (1991: 13). Museums thus represent a particular litmus test of community culture, given their longevity and role in bridging representations of the past with the present, and hope for posterity and the future — the *Museum Time Machine* (Lumley, 1988). Once a lodestar by which the citizen could navigate the uncertain depths of cultural value, the museum today is, as Giddens writes in *The Consequences of Modernity*, 'no longer certain of its role, no longer secure in its longevity, no longer isolated from political and economic pressures or from the explosions of images and meanings which are, arguably, transforming our relationships in contemporary society to time, space and reality' (cited in Irving, 1998: 26).

Architectural statement and form over function and the vernacular is therefore a compromise which state and cultural institutions are willing to make, despite the 'danger that the museum as cultural status symbol can shift the emphasis onto the building and its symbolic meaning to a degree to where what is inside is inside hardly seems to matter at all' (Schubert, 2000: 98). This risk is mitigated, however, not only through the sheer numbers of visitors (especially overseas tourists) and consequent attention these culture houses generate, but by the ancillary spending through bookshops, souvenir stores, restaurants and franchises, which are not a prerequisite of exhibition entry. In fact, if the visitors to these larger and themed blockbuster venues all attended the actual shows, their carrying capacity would be breached — 'passing trade' is an economic and operational necessity. Size therefore matters in museum economics and cultural policy (where driven by access and equity objectives). Their retail performance mirrors that of the department store and mall, as is evident in the level of sales in US museums (see Table 2). Remarkably, the key performance indicator of retail sales per square foot is higher in MoMA's museum stores than in Walmart which in 2002 topped the Forbes 500 most profitable companies.

In the USA between 1998 and 2000 more than 150 museums have been built or expanded at a total cost of \$4.3 billion (Zukin, 2001: 263) — half of the art museums in the USA have been opened since 1970 (Schubert, 2000). During the first seven years of the British National Lottery over £3 billion was awarded to arts, heritage and museum projects (Evans, 2002b), matching the Parisian *Grands Projets Culturels*; whilst in the early 1990s Montreal invested (with provincial support) nearly C\$500 million in new cultural facilities. During the same period the European Union via Regional Development funding allocated over 1.7 billion Euros to cultural projects in eligible assistance areas, notably southern European regions, Ireland and northern Britain (Evans and Foord, 2000). These are the most obvious publicly financed programmes, which are now being matched by provincial and secondary world aspiring 'cultural

**Table 2** US Museum retail performance, 2000

Museum Visitors Per Year (000s)	Retail Sales Per Square Foot (US\$)	Average Retail Sales Per Visitor (US\$)
125-200	288	2.85
200-500	590	2.12
500-4,000	932	5.15

Source: American Museum Store Association

cities', and by developing country cities served by a global network of branded designers, curators, developers and, to misuse Bourdieu, 'cultural capitalists'. If football is the new religion, museum-going may claim to be the new football, since more people visit these cultural emporiums than the national sports of baseball and football in the USA and in Britain.

### Guggenheim – the first global museum

Whilst the Pompidou represented the arts centre as regeneration tool, the first contemporary art house which has re-imagined an entire city is undoubtedly 'Guggenheim Bilbao', one of the most transformative symbols of city place-making of the last decade. This cultural icon, designed by American Frank Gehry at a cost of over £70 million, has captured the imagination and cultural tourism market with 1.3 million visitors in its first year (placing it second to the Prado in Madrid) and over 4 million to date. The Foundation's corporate strategy under the director Thomas Krens has been financed by a \$54 million bond issued against a floating charge on the museum's collection. This ultimate in branded leisure property is also being sought in cities from Rio, Shanghai, St Petersburg and Edinburgh to Liverpool where a Guggenheim, it is hoped, will complement the Walker Gallery as part of a masterplan for Port Liverpool and do for this city what the Albert Dock and 'Tate of the North' had achieved in the 1980s. Branded Guggenheim's have opened in Berlin at the Deutsche Bank HQ (christened the Deutsche Guggenheim) and in Las Vegas, casino-style, whilst in the home of the original museum, a US \$950 million new Guggenheim was planned (involving Gehry again), including a library, educational facility, theatre, skating rink and a park, floating above four existing piers on Manhattan's East River. The museum not only as exhibition space, but as pedagogical institution and urban attraction — the old Guggenheim fused with the Rockefeller Center (Ryan, 2001). This latest venture has, however, been deferred following the post-September 11 slump in tourism and stock market crash, from which a more modest, scaled-down scheme may emerge.

Over-reliance on a single brand also risks image decay as the brand dilutes, so as Bilbao's Provincial president, Josu Bergara says, apparently with no hint of irony: 'Other cities will have to find their own projects, not copies of the Guggenheim' (Crawford, 2001), and Anthony Giddens spelled this out when also in Bilbao: 'Money and originality of design are not enough ... You need many ingredients for big, emblematic projects to work, and one of the keys is the active support of local communities' (*ibid.*). Consensus from the city residents was not apparent in this case, however, the imported Guggenheim concept was resisted by Basque independents and artists alike (a museum guard was injured by a bomb on its opening), but it was the opportunity for major infrastructure improvements and the economic development potential that such a physical and international icon would bring which convinced the regional government, and which, it claims, has recouped its initial investment in the project and injected over £300 million into the Bilbao economy. Bilbao's renaissance has also been facilitated by public investment in new rail, air and road systems, including a new airport terminal with a capacity for 2.5 million, designed by Calatrava;

a new underground/metro running alongside both riverbanks, designed by Foster; and the Intermodal station at Abando, linking high speed train, bus, metro and car parking, as part of a mixed-use residential and commercial development, designed by Stirling & Wilford. However, its form has again belied its cultural value and function. The largest ground level space, 450 feet long, with 23-foot high walls and a curved ceiling, dwarfs the art and is more like an airport concourse. This disorients visitors, according to Newhouse: 'the architecture setting the agenda instead of the art on display — the dominant image is the container rather than the contents' (1998: 260). Like the industrial scale conversions of Tate Modern in London and the Baltic Flour Mills in Gateshead, these modern cathedrals overshadow all but the grandest canvas and installation and therefore limit and skew the range of art they can successfully display. Opinion on the success of the Guggenheim-Bilbao, like most costly arts flagships, is mixed, even contradictory (see Plaza, 1999, versus Gomez and Gonzalez, 2001; MacClancy, 1997; and Baniotopoulou, 2000). After the initial period, total attendance had declined to 760,000 in 2001 with far fewer locals bothering to attend whilst its tourist visitors continue to rise, in part due to low-cost airline routes from the UK and its access to the New York-sourced exhibition programme which appears to appeal more to an international than Basque viewer. The economic impacts of the museum, always notoriously hard to attribute, have declined within three years of opening and generated growth of only 0.47% to the Basque GNP in 1997. The one objective that Guggenheim has yet to achieve for Bilbao is the return of Picasso's *Guernica* to the Basque country, perhaps the only authentic gesture which would link this flagship to any notion of regional identity (only 7 out of 53 acquisitions in the first three years were from Basque artists).

Kren's idea to adopt the concept of global branding and marketing of mass produced goods resonates amongst the architects chosen to stamp their design brand. 'Bilbao babies are being born everywhere' is the comment on Gehry's interactive Experience Music Project (EMP) in Seattle. Built as a homage to local hero Jimi Hendrix, this aims to capitalize on the thousands of visitors to Hendrix's grave in Renton, south of Seattle, Washington state, as Graceland has served as the shrine to Elvis. This may ensure its viability in contrast to the National Centre for Popular Music which closed only a year after opening in Sheffield, West Yorkshire, despite substantial Lottery and European funding. Its pop artefacts were sold off to the Planet Hollywood chain and it now operates as a student union venue. In Manchester, in the North West, this city which has embraced the regenerative potential of the arts and sports (e.g. 2002 Commonwealth Games stadium) with refurbished city museum, a new Lowry Centre and Imperial War Museum ('of the north', designed by Libeskind) at Salford Quays, recently opened *Urbis*: 'a museum of the city'. Located close to a redeveloped retail centre damaged by an IRA bomb in 1996, this £30m modern glass and steel structure was originally commissioned for an unspecified purpose to celebrate the new millennium. Visitors travel up an indoor funicular to the fourth floor, led by a guide who in its opening week advises: 'the building responds organically to the surrounding streets — I don't know what that means, but it's what it says on the website' (Nicholls, 2002: 9). Worthy in intention, perhaps too so, and unsure if it is education or entertainment — a now common dilemma in the *edutainment* cultural facility — as Nicholls concludes: 'Frankly you'd do better to check out the café, sit in the square and give the rest of it a miss. See Manchester instead' (*ibid.*). Within a year of opening its first director resigned. City location alone is not sufficient to generate interest — symbolic association is needed to overcome the arbitrariness of the new and novel architecture, as well as inherited cultural facilities. Where memory or the sense of a place is effectively absent, and where a place is to be created, so to speak, from scratch, massive capital investment and revenue is likely to be required and success still cannot be guaranteed. Whether aspects of popular culture can successfully be museumified, e.g. sport, pop music, is also questionable where reduced to collections of artefacts, memorabilia and recordings obtainable and better experienced elsewhere. In Britain, potential oversupply of cultural and leisure attractions through Lottery, regeneration and European Regional

Development funding, has stretched visitor markets and project viability, within an essentially unplanned system: 'all over Britain, exotic heritage attractions many clad in metal, are appearing on vacant lots, like a fleet of crashed space-ships. If they all succeed in attracting all the visitors [they need], every person in Britain will have to spend four weeks of the year visiting them (currently they spend 4 days) (Spalding, 2002: 118). This is not just a UK-Lottery phenomenon — in the USA \$3 billion was being raised for new museum projects in 2001, including one large new museum for every other State in the Union.

The globalization of populated tourist space is a phenomenon common to major cities and urban heritage sites, which Edensor (1998: 11) has identified 'not only as a recent development, but one which can be understood as an expansion of inscribing power through the materialization of bourgeois ideologies since the nineteenth century'. Accordingly, places are now conceived not as nuclei of cultural belonging, foci of attachment or concern, but according to Kearns and Philo as 'bundles of social and economic opportunity competing against one another in the open market for a share of the capital investment cake' (1993: 18). The other process which the cultural flagship brings in its wake is therefore that of gentrification. When the Pompidou was opened, the *Les Halles* neighbourhood and its residential profile changed: 'Not so much a renewal of the old community but displacement and wholesale gentrification (Schubert, 2000: 98). This is apparent in the areas undergoing arts and entertainment makeovers and sites of cultural flagships. At the new Tate Modern Gallery in London, receiving over 5 million visitors in its first year (but like the Pompidou Centre, many were non-paying visitors rather than ticket-buying gallery attenders), adjoining artists studios were lost to cultural production as landlords capitalized on the hope value provided by this new attraction, in a rerun of *Loft Living* documented in New York by Sharon Zukin twenty years ago (1998). Meanwhile, up river, the original Tate Britain Gallery has seen its attendances fall dramatically, a possible zero sum game.

The global impact that such major cultural venues have within the international cultural milieu is also seen in the response from their competitors. No sooner had the new Tate Modern opened, the MoMA, New York, closed for major refurbishment to extend its gallery space with the obligatory *Ace Café* attached, in an attempt to regain its primacy. The synthesis of culture and consumption has reached new heights on the site of the former Guggenheim museum in New York's SoHo where a new Prada store designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas presages new stores planned for Tokyo and San Francisco — all part of the *Prada Universe*. According to Koolhaas this will lead to the reshaping of the concept and function of shopping pleasure and communications outlets so as to fuse consumption and culture. Stores will play a dual role acting as entertainment and cultural venues, transforming into an evening theatre with drop-down ceiling to floor staging for performances. At the Guggenheim SoHo outpost, however, attendance has been lower than expected. Synergy between local artists has not been realized as this community moved out to nearby Chelsea. However, not to be outdone, MoMA opened its second museum store also in downtown SoHo, turning this ad hoc artists' colony into an outdoor shopping mall of boutiques and design showrooms. Museums also seek to reach out beyond the franchised museum store with ephemeral events in the style of the installation artists they also exhibit. In the summer of 2002, MoMA moved temporarily from its mid-town home to a big blue box in Queens (MoMA *QNS*). The rooftop identification system bears the MoMA logo, as Irving suggests: 'Perhaps this giant sign, a fetishistic dressing-up of dead industrial typography, will obviate the need for dramatic architecture' (2002: 41). The need and pressure to decentralize, driven by collections too large to show (the majority of larger museums collections languish in storage), and state and sponsor imperatives towards access and 'mass observation', also feed 'the desire to retain its brand integrity, [and] its position as a modern acropolis. You realize it cannot afford to diversify too much since the MoMA brand is about luxury goods' (*ibid.*). Brand protection and integrity is therefore as critical for the cultural institution as it is for the patented trainer or gameboy.

Finally, the completion of this global circle can be seen in developing and 'new world' cities such as Shanghai (Wu, 2000), Kuala Lumpur (Biswas, 2000) and Singapore — a city coined by its colonial founder as the 'Manchester of the East' and which has positioned itself as the *Global City for the Arts* (Chang, 2000) — and now Beijing, which plans a major opera house complex and hosts the 2008 Olympics. Hong Kong has likewise commissioned a £2 billion arts, cultural and entertainment quarter, to be designed by star UK architect (Sir) Norman Foster. Based on reclaimed land on west Kowloon's waterfront, the complex will incorporate a performance venue, a range of theatres, cinemas, concert halls and modern art museum, alongside retail and leisure facilities. The signature feature is a huge canopy 'inspired' by Chinese calligraphy. References to ethnic and regional culture in design, content and operation of these facilities has a tendency to fall at the outset (Guggenheim-Bilbao), or all but disappear between the design concept stage where community and political support (and minimization of resistance) is required, and the final product. As Chang (2000) documented in the case of the Esplanade Theatres by the Bay, recently opened in Singapore, this \$250 million project includes a 1,800-seat concert hall and 2,000-seat lyric theatre, located next to a modern Marina Bay hotel and retail complex where the Singapore river widens out past the high rise business district. This self-styled Esplanade was supposed to house smaller studios and performance spaces for local groups: 'intimate Asian performance and Chinese opera', but these plans were eliminated early on. Arts practitioners expressed concern that with its mega-structures and high rentals, it will be amenable mainly to blockbuster events such as foreign pop concerts and Broadway shows, and less accommodating towards smaller, local, experimental and non-profit productions.

## Conclusion

This globalization of *edutainment* (a term coined by the Disney Corp) through urban cultural development therefore looks to the transmission of power through a mobile metropolitan elite of museum and gallery directors, signature architects, branded chain stores and footloose performers, all of which require a network of cultural institutions and 'houses' through which to circulate their ideas, brand image and to tour collections and product(s)ions for maximum return in both cultural and economic capital terms. This shift has required a major change in the organizational culture of these institutions, notably in the museum sector where the curator's role as research-oriented keeper of repository and collection has been superseded by the politically-savvy marketing, education (new markets) and regeneration expert (Evans, 1995). This crisis besets old museums unable to reconcile or make this change, such as the British Museum, recently subject to a staff strike in the face of 150 job losses, and more frequent changes of director. The Prado national museum in Madrid ousted its artistic director replacing him with a general in the Spanish military. Some have dispensed with the museum director/curator altogether, such as the Los Angeles County Museum, whilst entire museum services have been under extreme financial and management pressure from governments, such as in Mexico and Italy, countries that rely heavily on their cultural heritage to project national identity and maintain tourism markets (Evans, 1998a). The days when the art museum was the final arbiter of aesthetic quality, if that was ever substantially the case, are over according to Zolberg, and the end to their mono-function and standard form means providing 'an elite experience for everyone' (1994). This trend also creates a serial replication of architectural style, blockbuster exhibitions and shows, giving centre stage to a marriage of culture and commerce and providing their sponsors with a high profile in these culture capitals. This is not limited to the contemporary corporate brand names, but embraces the old patron foundations such as Getty, Rockefeller, Gulbenkian to the *new money* and modern Medicis of Thyssen, Saatchi and the now ubiquitous Guggenheim franchise.

North American and European-based architects and developers tend to dominate these major cultural schemes which look to the international touring and tourist circuit and legitimization represented by the global brand and *edutainment* facility, rather than any vernacular form of design and production — *Karaoke* architecture, where it is not important how well you can sing, but that you do it with verve and gusto (Biswas, 2000: 137). As Wu observes from Shanghai: ‘Foreign architectural firms are involved in urban design and planning, e.g. the Shanghai Centre a vast multi-use complex comprising 72 luxury apartments, 25,000 square meters of prime offices, a theatre, trademark exhibition atrium and 5 star hotel . . . The design models and plans are used to impress foreign fund managers, investors and politicians’ (2000: 1365). As he also remarks ‘Internationalisation not only brings alien lifestyles, but also provides a way to interpret their symbolic meanings’ (*ibid.*). The stakes in securing international architectural competitions are high politically and in terms of trade relations. The influence of western design and capital therefore extends to diplomatic intervention (with architect and building contracts a valuable export trade), for example in the case of Beijing, the governors of this great piece of city-making looked to a major cultural complex development just outside of the city gates to host an opera house, concert hall, main theatre and performance spaces, the ‘worlds biggest’ (able to hold 10,000 people). The competition-winning British architects were told three times that they had won, then three times that they had not. With French government intervention this commission went to a French design firm who proposed a more grandiose design — a postmodern glass oval dome, recalling Napoleonic scales. As the losing architect put it; ‘the building as icon rather than the cultural building as part of an urban complex’ (Farrell, 2000: 32).

This return to the problematic but seemingly irresistible *Grand Projet* which fuses modernist architecture with a postmodern frame, based on traditional industrial forms — bridges, ferris wheels, funiculars, public utilities, factories and recreated ‘festival marketplaces’ — sees the city as the pre-eminent and strategic site for collective conspicuous consumption and celebration. This confounds the post-Fordist predictions of a dispersal of cultural production and de-urbanization with these post-industrial city centres now reversing their population decline (e.g. Manchester city centre’s population has increased five fold), and dominating cultural industries employment, to the benefit of the professional-managerial classes. The *hard-branding* of the culture city is thus being facilitated by the agglomeration of cultural consumption in both spatial and symbolical terms (Scott, 2001). The convergence and co-branding between museums, art houses and retail activity is, of course, a long established phenomenon. I.M. Pei’s Louvre extension and underground shopping plaza/entrance *Carnoussel du Louvre*, draws on one of the first leisure-shopping experiences under one roof, the Bon Marché department store where modern techniques of painting display were first derived (Cowan, 1998). Locating new art museums and centres in heritage sites and districts, or physically joining the modern extension with classical and industrial structures themselves, on the one hand seeks to capture the sense of place and symbolism associated with the past and community familiarity (‘brand’). However, as Ryan observes: ‘the new museum may attach itself physically to the old (part parasite, part life-support system) [but] the contemporary nature of such institutions seems irrevocably to revolve around new photo opportunities, so-called Star Architecture and magnified scenarios for shopping’ (2000: 90). As the distinction was blurred in department stores which first encouraged free entry and browsing, today products are displayed in changing exhibitions, ‘repositioning the store as a tourist destination akin to other cultural sites. In turn . . . museums are having to aggressively market themselves and license their collections, histories and buildings as a “brand”’ (Cummings and Lewandowska, 2000: 22–3).

The hard branding of the culture city therefore looks to the power and practices of commercial branding and its packaged entertainment. By so doing they benefit from the democratization associated with leisure shopping (and capture, literally, these same shoppers) and the urban consumption experience. Jackson in particular suggests that the

pejorative public-private dialectic may be unhelpful, even patronizing and that: 'notions of consumer citizenship need to be carefully situated in and socially differentiated ... Rather than assuming that commodification and privatization are inherently undemocratic and reactionary social processes' (1998: 188). Balibrea, on the other hand, writing from the exemplar culture capital Barcelona, still sees in this situation the erosion of the 'public' where 'the redefinition of the space occupied by culture ... is more and more radically commodified and dependent on private producers deciding who has access to their — also private — spaces of consumption' (2001: 195). These new monuments also suffer the fate of brand decay and the high maintenance required to retain market share. Since substantial public resources are required, sums and levels of risk which few private investors would countenance, their opportunity cost is also high. High because of the scale and scope which political and cultural proponents require in order to assuage resistance to such mega-projects. In previous eras such resistance was muted or minimal (e.g. World Fairs, public museums). As trust in 'public man' has fallen (Sennett, 1986), and urban society is no longer deferential or mono-cultural, popularity and impact measured in terms of visitor numbers is crucial in this cost-benefit calculation. The cost which is becoming increasingly evident and common, irrespective of their location or culture, is borne in terms of cultural diversity and production (versus consumption and mediation); in community cultural activity and amenity; and by those who do not have a stake in the gentrification processes which attach to these emerging cultural quarters. 'What is being branded in these cities is not just the immediate institution, or anything so arcane as a collection, but the city itself. The museum becomes an icon and magnet for post-industrial urbanity' (Ryan, 2000: 91).

**Graeme Evans** (g.evans@csm.linst.ac.uk), Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP, UK.

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