

Hard-Branding the Art Museum – *from Prado to Prada*

Graeme Evans

Introduction

The designation of the cultural city and the use of the arts 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 present a synthesis of the physical and symbolic economies of urban consumption spaces and which public culture has now emulated. Hard branding the city through cultural flagships 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. The conception, marketing and management of these cultural enterprises has arguably shifted towards an obsession with their form (and image), and away from their core and historic functions.

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 *fantasisation* (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 life-cycle (e.g. Coca Cola). Hard branding is therefore a specific attempt to capitalise 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 and Hollywood spin-offs (such as MGM, Universal and Granada studios). 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 makes particular impacts on local distinctiveness and the urban landscape, and therefore represents an extreme example of the commodification of consumption spaces.

This particular manifestation of globalisation 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” and reduce distribution and transaction costs. 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) provides 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). 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).

Consumption in this case also requires that consumers visit and experience first hand the place, if not of production, but 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 1999: 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.

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. 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 '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 the 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* - which are now branded through cultural association. Examples of these ethnoscaapes (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 (home to MACBA), which never actually hosted a Chinese community. To have the largest Chinese quarter is now a claim for which cities such as Manchester, 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; 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 Macintosh 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 Macintosh *Glasgow Herald* building, converted into Scotland's first architecture centre. Since then, the reknown Glasgow School of Art has changed their logo and lettering from the archetypal Macintosh design as forward looking organisations 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 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 '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).

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 decentralisation), 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.

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, east European cities of Prague, Krakow as well as non-EU members 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 cultural triangle with the new museum of contemporary art, a multiplex cinema and a planned tennis palace museum (Verwinjnen 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 cafe 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 Toole 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 twenty separate arts organisations 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). 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 “Hausmanisation” in the mid-1800s, razing its fortifications and replacing this space in the *Grand Manner*.

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 *arkiteckton*’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 the world's most exciting cities' (in Boniface 1998: 29).

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 *Musee a Croissance Illimité* (1939) and Wright's Guggenheim in New York epitomised this style. What they also symbolised 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 2002: 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).

Pompidou

One of the first major cultural facilities to be deliberately located in a less prestigious city district has been 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 2002: 60). Open plan layout and free standing temporary walls made it almost impossible to show sculpture and painting satisfactorily. Part of 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 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 £55m second refurbishment has undoubtedly impacted on the Place Beauborg 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 serve in large part as culturally legitimated amusement parks and culture cafes (Heinich 1988). Their proponents and city sponsors argue that this is one step to the democratisation of culture, that the casual visitor may in time be encouraged to enter the institution proper (on re-opening, 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’ (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 1998: 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 (Table 1). 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.

Table 1. 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
500-4000	932	5.15

Source: American Museum Store Association

In the USA between 1998 to 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 £3bn. billion was awarded to arts, heritage and museum projects (Evans 2002b), matching the Parisian *Grands Projets Culturel*; 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 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-imaged 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 £70m, 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 \$54m 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, 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\$950m 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-9/11 slump in tourism and stock market crash, and 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 £300m into the Bilbao economy. However the Guggenheim’s 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 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, Gomez and Gonzalez 2001, Baniotopoulou 2000 and MacClancy 1997). After the initial period, total attendance had declined to 760,000 in 2001 with far fewer locals bothering to attend whilst its tourist visitors continues 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* in Seattle. Built as a homage to local hero

Jimi Hendrix, this aims to capitalise 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 advised: "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. What was being managed and promoted was never clear from the outset - 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. 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 capitalised 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. Meanwhile up river, the original Tate Britain Gallery has seen its attendances fall dramatically, a possible zero sum game (Evans 1999).

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 realised 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 Irvine 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 decentralise, 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 realise 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.

Conclusion

This globalisation 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 organisational 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 who rely heavily on their cultural heritage to project national identity and maintain tourism markets. 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.

This return to the problematic but seemingly irresistible *Grand Projet* which fuses modernist architecture with a post-modern 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-urbanisation with these post-industrial city centres now reversing their population decline (e.g. Manchester city centre’s population has increase 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 *Carrousel 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 (Cowen 1999). 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: 22-23).

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 democratisation associated with leisure shopping (and capture, literally, these same shoppers) and the urban consumption experience. Jackson in particular suggests that the perjorative public-private dialectic may be unhelpful, even patronising and that: 'notions of consumer citizenship need to be carefully situated in and socially differentiated...Rather than assuming that commodification and privatisation 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).

[6,987 words]