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Design and the Art of Management THEMED ISSUE

THE DENVER BIENNIAL
OF THE AMERICAS
Bruce Mau

DESIGN THINKING
Bauer and Eagen

DANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING
Rowe and Smart

BUILDING DESIGN CAPABILITY
Sung and Chang

INTERACTION DESIGN AND INNOVATION
Holmlid

DESIGN METHOD AND COLLABORATION
Vaughan, Stewart, Dunbar and Yuille

DESIGN PROCESSES AND TOOLS
Robertson

STRATEGIC PLANNING,
ART AND ARCHITECTURE
Rubinyi

DESIGNING INNOVATION
INTO ORGANIZATIONS
Costello, Mader and Gatto

THE ARTIST ENTREPRENEUR
Fletcher

International journal of art and aesthetics in management and organizational life

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The Aesthesis Project was founded in January 2007 and is a research project investigating art and aesthetics in management and organizational contexts. The project has its roots in the first Art of Management and Organization Conference in London in 2002, with successive conferences held in Paris, Krakow and The Banff Centre, Canada. From those events emerged an international network of academics, writers, artists, consultants and managers, all involved in exploring and experimenting with art in the context of management and organizational research. The Aesthesis Project will be developing extensive research and artistic projects internationally, with academic research fellows and associate creative practitioners, publications and consultancy.

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EDITORIAL

This edition of *Aesthesis* has had a long gestation period, in part due to its visual complexity. The contributors to this issue (except Bruce Mau) were originally convened by Ken Friedman and Laurene Vaughan for an international conference stream on design management, held over four days at the Art of Management and Organization Conference at the Banff Centre Canada in September 2008 (For the next invigorating conference, in Istanbul, see the rear of this issue). Despite the divergence of subject matter and different disciplinary approaches to the subject of design, a genuinely stimulating and international dialogue emerged, and this issue of *Aesthesis* is the product of that dialogue. Not all the research contributors to the conference were able to continue working on their material for this issue, so for their input we thank Rob Austin and Daniel Hjorth of Copenhagen Business School and Gökçe Dervisoglu of Istanbul Bilgi University. As to this issue – enormous thanks are due to Bruce Mau and the Bruce Mau Studio in Toronto and Chicago, to Seth Goldenberg, Andrew Clark, and particularly the wonderful Whitney Geller!

Ken Friedman's art, design, performance, and media work, as well as his academic research and leadership has stretched across many countries as it has industrial sectors and academic disciplines. From the extremities of Fluxus in the 1960s to his current academic role in Australia, it is a pleasure to have his editorial presence in this issue – as it is Laurene Vaughan, whose design leadership and project management is evident in her collaborative paper in this issue. Vaughan is part of a growing sector of design researchers and managers in Australia whose geographic location, far from inducing a sense of isolation, provides the impetus for global networking and international projects.

During the past two years The Aesthesis Project has been centrally concerned with three objectives – first, bringing together creative practitioners (whether artists, managers or consultants) with scholars and researchers, breaking down the institutionalised barriers that keep us apart; second, encouraging and facilitating the visual presentation and interpretation of academic research; and third, in part as a result of the second, encouraging public dissemination of research. It is with these objectives in mind that this diverse group of contributors have been brought together – designers, consultants, academics, design managers, design business managers and design project managers. Our theme is 'design', but the content is relevant to any organization or manager concerned with developing innovation models, product or service development, IT capability and the creative process, design audit and evaluation.

'Design' is still viewed as a 'specialist' discipline, largely associated with 'making things' – and yet, what organization, company or institution does not function 'visually' and do so using design – from their web presence, corporate facilities, market communications, product design and packaging, branding. Who needs convincing that the leaders in global business invest massively in their design – from their strategic brand to new product development and service design innovation. The emphasis of this issue therefore, opening our Papers section with Robert Bauer and Ward Eagen's seminal article, is 'thinking' – using design concepts, processes, tools and models to implement creative and productive change, and this can be done in any organizational context. However, far from being supplementary to extant organizational processes, as Rowe and Smart show with regard to the biotech industry, thinking 'design' can be central to conceptualising organizational processes. Even Robertson's 'models' of design thinking, used largely in a creative agency context, can be implemented in generic way within multiple business contexts.

However, as much as design can become both a mechanism for business or organizational development, the prevailing narrowly instrumentalist and functional conception of 'design' must be challenged – design as the mechanism through which art, culture and creativity can be exploited for corporate profit. Design is both culture and aesthetics as well as industrial innovation and business 'solutions'. Great design creates a new field – a virtual zone between business/industry and culture, where both enter into dialogue and do so in a critical spirit. Culture does not have a monopoly on creativity; industry is not always the source of economic development; business is not the only means of generating wealth. Only in the critical dialogue between art-culture and business-industry, with its conflicts and contradictions, will we be able to ascertain the 'what and how' of developing our economies.

It is the purpose of this issue to hold these two dimensions in tension – the industrial application of design thinking and the broader aesthetic or cultural meaning of design, a meaning that is never wholly appropriated strategically or in fact can be, as it involves aesthetics and cultural values that are always shifting in their role in the experience of designer and consumer alike. We feature Tung-Jung Sung and Pai-Yu Chang's systematic analytical assessment of a design consultancy's resources and capabilities, category by category; their analysis is highly useful in any design audit or context of rigorous organizational evaluation. We also feature Richard Fletcher's reflections on the new 'artist entrepreneur' and their role in the 'new creative economy', and Lucy Kimbell's review of three of the most notable design exhibitions in recent years.

Most of our papers have emerged from the contributor's professional experience, which is true of Bob Robertson and his agency, as well as Kelly Costello, Roger Mader and Jessie Gatto, where we find design as a mechanism through which innovation is conceptualised and implemented within organizational development. Laurene Vaughan, Nifeli Stewart, Michael Dunbar and Jeremy Yuille take us step by step through a University-based

research project, where the design and development of an online digital video prototyping and annotation tool is undertaken reflectively, considering the methodological implications of their steps. Stefan Holmlid similarly stands in the gap between university research and industry, drawing on his experience of both, investigating the new frontier of interaction design. Kati Rubinyi offers what is probably the most unpredictable paper, moving from the framework of web design for urban planning in contemporary California to a visionary architectural project of the early 1960s – Cedric Price's *Fun Palace*.

Bruce Mau, who opens this issue, is one of the great designers and design thinkers of our time. His design practice, research, writing and management draws on the great philosophical and formal traditions of design and art history, but is dynamically future-oriented. Mau articulates the need for design as a political imperative – faced with global climate change and chronic economic instability – the obligation for massive change must be promoted in the way we live our lives, our communication, culture, cities, corporations, social and education systems.

The term 'massive change' became Mau's leitmotif with his 2004 multimedia exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, articulating the means by which design method can address structural problems in areas as diverse as information, transportation, energy, materials, manufacturing, military, health and politics. The resultant book, *Massive Change: Bruce Mau and the Institute Without Boundaries* (Phaidon) is a major contribution to the history of design as a discipline, but more than that, conceptualised design as a premier synthetic, multi-disciplinary and non-partisan means by which the most major human environment-based dilemmas can be addressed.

Bruce Mau's contribution here in *Aesthesis* is his latest project: as Artistic Director of the international cultural event, The Denver Biennial of the Americas, he will demonstrate the centrality of design thinking to cultural politics as well as global wellbeing – our beliefs, values, lifestyles. It will become a platform that design has rarely had.

This issue has been a long journey of discovery – on behalf of the editors of The Aesthesis Project I hope you find it inspiring, instructive and useful.

Jonathan Vickery
issue General Editor



FEATURE

The Artist-entrepreneur in the New Creative Economy

Richard Fletcher

'New knowledge is available at little or no cost to those who are on the lookout, full of curiosity and bright enough not to miss their chances.'
Fritz Machlup¹

In the new emerging creative economy, the entrepreneur and the artist appear as conjurers, or at least, everyone hopes they will make appear economic value and cultural meaning where previously there was none. It is understandable, that over the past two decades of manufacturing and service sector decline in the West, and now global economic recession, it is expected that the creative sectors will pull cash-stuffed rabbits out of their hats.

Looking further ahead are popular writers Jeremy Rifkin and Richard Florida, who see an inevitable and permanent reduction in the amount of human labour required in all but the most creative, knowledge intensive tasks, placing the creative industry in a strategic position with regard economic leadership and development. Another post-industrial thinker, Yoneji Masuda, not only sees the first fully automated factory appearing in around ten years time² but also predicts that this latest industrial revolution is occurring at a speed several times faster than previous revolutions. In a theoretic leap of conjecture, coextensive with the utopian sociology of the 1960s, this situation has been cumulatively described as the post-industrial era, the post-scarcity economy, the media society, information capitalism, the knowledge economy, the network society, or any combination defining a new nexus of intangible, dynamic communication-centred activity. Economically, the trend has been to subcontract the

Image courtesy of the Custard Factory

developing world for one's agricultural, manufacturing and now even service sector needs, and get into techno-info-communication-knowledge based industries. One increasingly important sector of these industries – both economically as well as symbolical – is communication-based, cultural, creative or 'tacit-knowledge' businesses. Speaking at the recent UK Government-sponsored *Digital Britain Summit* in London in April 2009, the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, stated that the creative industries would for Britain be the 'driver' out of the global recession.

Given the open sky of technological and communications development in the 1990s, and the obvious immeasurability of the potential of 'creativity', the increasing political investment in the creative industries is no surprise. The creative industries stimulate wild optimism, but are also broad enough in their intellectual scope to be appropriated by government policy in diverse areas, social, cultural and economic. Facilities for the creative industries have become stock-in-trade for urban reconstruction and 'regeneration' strategies worldwide. International competition among design agencies for top 'creatives' is fierce. Yet the blurry nature of creative, cultural and knowledge sectors makes a definition infuriatingly vague, no doubt as vague as definitions of concepts such as creativity, culture or knowledge. Richard Florida's now debated definition identifies a tiny 'super-creative core', who conjure up ideas that are then put to use by 'creative professionals'. The addition of a rising clerical army of 'technicians', who use technology-specific genres of creativity in their work, broadens the eponymous creative class even further. Silicon Valley would appear to be a hot spot for the creative industries; however, despite its prodigious level of technological invention, the area remains a dull industrial park with no 'soul' or sense of creative location; it is creativity without social or cultural environment. Clearly, both the head and the heart can be creative, but the end results could hardly be more different. History is littered with examples of 'golden ages' where both art and science have flourished together, but the result can entail a bifurcation of human resources and split in the appropriation of human energies, art and science learning from each other but then going their separate ways. The result is not necessarily sustainable unified economic development, and not a transformation in the socio-cultural context. If business is confined to a linear process that runs from production line, to market, to the balance-sheet, then to shareholders profits, then it will not result in genuine economic development.

The 'artist-entrepreneur', however, is an emerging professional identity that sees a role mid-way between the internal idea-focus of the artist, and the external market-focus of the entrepreneur, and holds something of an insight for genuine economic development. As a definition it attempts in some way to conceptualise the professional role of the cultural industries worker that moves beyond sector specific task entrenched labour. For them, the song is not the artwork, the festival is. The canvas is not the artwork, the gallery is. Using the words of Donald Olsen, they see 'the city as a work of art', even though in reality they are limited to a certain 'creative quarter' of that city.

In this article I turn over views on this new professional role of 'artist-entrepreneur' gleaned in dialogue with staff from four creative companies in the 'creative quarter' of the UK's second largest city, Birmingham.

The quarter is officially known as The Custard Factory³. Built over a century ago as a custard factory, it now houses over a hundred creative companies – from design and marketing agencies to artist's studios, craft workshops and media suites, and is serviced by a central administration, with public galleries, independent shops and restaurants, one of Birmingham's biggest nightclubs and live music venues.

The companies I consulted were in some ways typical of small enterprises in any other sector, the advantages being flexibility, room for individual passion, and the ability to cater to niche audiences. On the other hand, as entrepreneurial creative industries, involved in a fast moving 'reactive' relation to the market (or client's needs) for them standard business strategy and planning is much harder, certainly in the long term, and growing the general infrastructure of the business beyond their small number of employees is also problematic given the specific skills-set and business capital invested in each one. The primacy of the creative individual is one of the characteristics of the creative firm. Even though the structure of production in the creative industries is project-based and team-driven, the individual plays a pre-eminent role in contract procurement, client relations, idea-generation



Photo: Richard Fletcher

and creative execution, and so on. In what follows I will refer to the artist and entrepreneur as though they were separate individuals, in many cases they are better viewed as two dimensions of the same individual.

Strategic direction

There is no shortage of ideas, big or small, within the Birmingham organizations I consulted. Ideas can be plentiful, and practically leap out at the individual who, according to Machlup, maintains a certain professional poise – characterised as ‘on the lookout, full of curiosity’. The difficulty lies in the ability to sift through the possible to identify the probable within a strategic context. Whereas the artist might be content to continue exploring their ideas ‘internally’, purely on the level of expression – an exercise in visual semantics and hermeneutics – the entrepreneur is immediately pushed up against the external, vicious scepticism of the market, and selects ideas that have the potential to be ‘born’ into this reality. The key factor in an ideas-selection process in our company context is its notional suitability to the public or private market, and for the creative industries the ‘social-public’ is as much a market reality as ‘commercial-private’. The product and process, whether it is a design, a novel or a performance, can have value to both, depending on its direction. This juggling of objectives in distinct (opposing?) markets gives the creative organizations a schizophrenic character. Given that ‘creativity’ is their essential ingredient, they are socially and culturally driven, but still need to retain a substantial amount of business ‘bite’. In my Custard Factory companies, despite the fact that social or public commissions (and or public funding for social projects) offer an intrinsic social and cultural value and content, there was still a general preference for the (paradoxical) ‘freedom’ of the private market. One creative worker remarked that a public commission seemed frequently to be ‘more trouble than it’s worth’. Another made a clear association with imprisonment, saying that ‘I’ve done my time’ in the public sector. Creative workers lie between the contradiction that social-cultural contexts do not themselves provide the freedom (economic, management, organization) needed for creativity, but of course private business, offering that freedom, has no immediate value-laden social-cultural context with which to engage.

My Custard Factory organizations all have strategic visions that are driven by the socio-cultural ideals of the individuals that direct them. Could the constant mis-direction and dis-alliance of our public and private markets make the development or sustainability of their enterprises problematic? There seems to be a sad resignation that the public-social sectors, often driven by a mindset of political vote-gathering, is not quite living up to its potential and thus does not in itself offer a ground for genuine sustainable development. This is ironic, as it is the markets that are in constant flux, not the world of public institutions. The length of a typical public funding period for social or cultural projects (even for ‘Regularly Funded Organizations’, now an officially favoured genre of Government funded organization) has been seen to be painfully brief. The scope and scheduling of the contractual relationships forged in the private market, however, are more straightforward, if at times brutal. The artist-entrepreneurial spirit can allow such organizations to ‘jump’ from one market to the other, but this can quickly lead to employee burnout for the less resilient. New national legal structures for new generation ‘social entrepreneurial’ companies, such as ‘social enterprises and community interest’ companies, were identified as a step in the right direction. However, even the Social Enterprise Coalition admits that ‘..There is still an ongoing debate among practitioners and academics over the exact definition of social enterprise’⁴. Asking public and private organizations to suddenly ‘jump into bed’ with each other over joint concerns is naïve, but it can be broadly seen that the artist-entrepreneurs’ work suffers from being recognised and the conditions for the development of this role are not coming together.



Image courtesy of the Custard Factory

Intellectual property

What is the value of an idea? Nothing if it is common knowledge and nothing if it is completely unexposed; there's a joke in the industry – the only way to protect IP is never to tell anyone. Copyrights and the ability to exploit intellectual property economically have been at the core of the creative industries for centuries; but they have always been difficult to manage. The collapse of the music industry is one of the most relevant places to look to for current management issues in IP soon to hit film, literature and design. Many of the issues seem contradictory. For instance, it has been shown in a number of studies,⁵ that the most active music pirates are also often the most enthusiastic (legal) consumers. The recent changes in consumption show a shift in society's value of music, from the physical to the experiential. Much of the established industry was either unwilling or unprepared to accept this. With an abundance of creative and cultural products available to the average consumer (whether legal or not), creative industries must, more than ever, break down the real value of their products. Are your customers buying a lifestyle, an experience, something that gives them prestige? How much can be given away without damaging the value of what you are expecting consumers to actually pay for? Difficult questions of course, but if the alternative is ignoring the problem, dragging your heels, throwing your customers in jail, or irritating countless more for their own 'protection', then these are questions anyone who creates IP must ask.

The Custard Factory companies seemed well aware of the challenges and opportunities they faced with the 'value' created by the artist-entrepreneur. The most valuable piece of IP for them was not in fact within the services or products provided, but in the relation between the service/product and their brands' overall identity – it's ability to symbolise the unique nature of the organization. The artist-entrepreneur relishes standing alone in the marketplace. It may be a niche market, but they are the only ones who understand it, often having played a key role in the establishment of their own localised market (the gallery circuit, the music scene, etc.). The main challenge identified here was the legal trouble involved in challenging the theft of IP, especially when taken on an international context. Political relationships between nations add a further layer of complexity when attempting to fight infringements overseas. There is unlikely to be a satisfactory conclusion to IP problems any

time soon, but education is at least a step in the right direction, combined with an amount of hard-headed fatalism: one of my interlocutors stated: 'When you're talking to artists and creating training programmes for them, it's always at the top of their list of requirements. But you can't protect an idea, and I don't think you'll find anyone in this business who hasn't been shafted one way or another. I have.'



Photo: Richard Fletcher



Photo: Richard Fletcher

Globalisation

One of the paradoxes of culture, is that even though it emerges from the particularity of a language, identity and people, cultural and creative products are often the most marketable internationally – beyond their cultural borders. My Custard Factory organizations were well aware of this, and made particular reference to the UK Department of Trade & Industry [now bifurcated into the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and the botched Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills] as being the main public organization helping them tap into the global market. However, the main concern among the organizations is on competition for the 'next generation' of artist-entrepreneurs. Versatile creative workspaces and cheap residential space is identified as being in short supply, and the individuals tipped to continue driving economic growth are suspected to be 'turned off' by overpriced, corporate-style living. The 'gentrification' argument (the renovation and commercialisation of de-industrialised – affordable – work spaces) has been specifically backed up by Florida's and Rifkin's research. Professional technical opportunities are being lost to countries that have better supported the manufacturing sectors in which these skills are put to use: 'While our colleges are closing down specialist courses, China is repositioning itself as 'designed in China, not just made in China' and opening up hundreds of new colleges.'

There is both hope and cynicism around 'culture-led urban regeneration' as a factor in giving towns or cities or urban regions a competitive edge. Artificially zoned areas, such as 'creative clusters' and 'creative quarters', can attempt to carbon copy established cultural centres, but cannot mimic their creative-cultural developmental process. The Hoxton and Shoreditch areas of London are examples of urban areas that became 'creative' simply through the availability of cheaper studio and production space, with artists and designers moving there of their own accord – call it spontaneous random collectivity. The Custard Factory emerged the opposite way: a local business entrepreneur took advantage of the large cheap factory space abandoned in the process of urban de-industrialisation, renovating it in the minimal way tolerable only to creative firms, the space is now let out at a cheap rate of rental. His motives were not entirely commercial, as he enjoys the way the Custard Factory has given an opportunity to many start-ups and creative enterprises, most of which run at a year on year loss for the first five years of their business life.

Many of the Custard Factory artist-entrepreneurs stated that although it was of some use to be clustered in a facility such as the Custard Factory, they would simply be doing business elsewhere if it didn't exist, providing of course they could afford it. The traditional 'clustering' of trades in the same urban area or part of a city, engaged in mutual support, information and skills exchange, attracting a great passing trade, is not necessarily conducive to a creative engagement with the market. These areas typically attract 'Bobos', the bourgeoisie-bohemians identified by 'comic sociologist' David Brooks,⁶ who combine a counter-culture image with typically middle class values. This can entail a certain social homogenisation and reverse the economic advantages of a location for creative companies: for example, the following quote is taken from a letter of complaint sent to the mainstream breakthrough graffiti/street artist known as Banksy, who is now one of the most famous artists in the UK:

'I am writing to ask you to stop painting your things where we live...My brother and me have lived here all our lives but these days so many yuppies and students are moving here neither of us can afford to buy a house where we grew up anymore...Do us all a favour and go do your stuff somewhere else like Brixton [2006: 130]⁷

On a far grander scale, there also seems to be apprehension of the commercialisation of culturally significant goods. Like air or water, culture is a valuable yet immeasurable resource, the damage of which brings universal detriment. The tourist industry has become a de facto part of the creative industries, as well as a major client for creative agencies, culture is their business. However, the development of the tourist and destination industries can entail a bulldozing of local cultures with the construction of shining new hotels whether in the UK or around the world. Tourism is one of the major contributors to the new 'class-cleansing' of cities and the creation of a new social class system of habitation. Both Florida and Rifkin note that creative centres often show the greatest levels of basic economic inequality. The job opportunities created for a local population will sadly (to parody Dickens) have more of serving designer coffee about them, than of design. The lucky high-fliers of the creative class are genuine citizens of the world, able to follow opportunity wherever it lies, but this often entails taking the chance away from 'real locals'. Encouraging the creative industries does not in itself make for an equitable society in the face of manufacturing, service and agricultural decline: 'The emerging knowledge sector will be able to absorb a small percentage of the displaced labour, but not nearly enough to make a substantial difference in the rising unemployment figures.' [2004: 291]⁸

Who is 'the artist'?

The 'artist' has an unstable and chameleon professional identity. An artist who applies their creative skills to commercial work is usually categorised as a 'designer', regardless of the nature of the art. As for the social-public environment, artists who work with an explicit 'social conscience' are often regarded to be inhibiting their 'pure' artistic productivity and excellence, even by other artists. However, our Custard Factory discussants agreed that generally the professional identity of the artist is consolidating around social-public projects and as a 'social agent'. The irony of this seems to be that an individual finds it difficult to gain respect as both commercial and a 'community' and a 'high art' practitioner, becoming too easily pigeonholed. There appears to be no shortage of prospective artistic talent and artists available for our Custard Factory organizations to work with, for both private or public projects, but there are few artists who manage to maintain a stable economic existence except those who are the most career focused: 'There has to be a level of talent, but it's their business skills that will make or break them.'

The artist's qualifications or training also are of little relevance when being considered for collaboration or commission by such companies, even though artists are generally becoming more credible as 'professionals' in the marketplace. Professional development for artists – the transition from either the college or the studio to the working business environment – is not generally facilitated by either education or industry. Though the idea of more professional accreditation was roundly dismissed by many of my discussants, there was an acknowledgement that the current situation most artists face – post-education or post-studio, of sporadic one-off workshops as career development – is not providing creative organizations with the kind of collaborators they need. Perhaps the growth of artists' collectives can be seen as an attempt to give a structure to professional development that the market itself will never be able to provide. Collectives can either take the form of an entrenched studio sub-culture, which can institutionalise the worst sense of detachment from the market, or a craft-workshop structured environment, largely grounded in technical skills-based knowledge. Or, like the Custard Factory, artists can 're-invent' themselves as 'creative industries practitioners'.

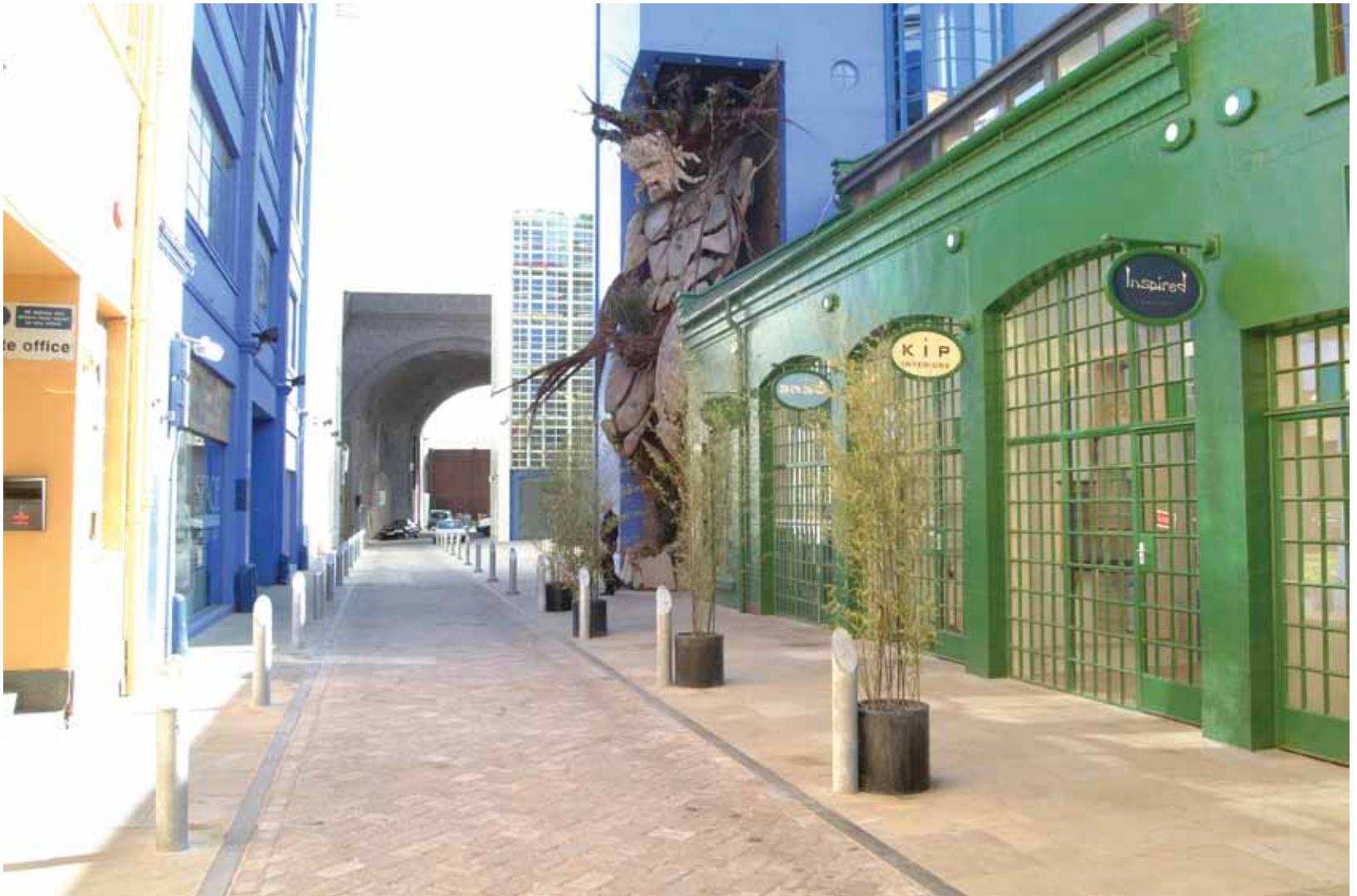


Image courtesy of the Custard Factory

In these business-based environments artists can pool administrative resources, learn from each other and more effectively quantify their own skills-set for an intelligible marketplace. The consensus is generally that artists are only ever judged on the quality of their work, and aside from the usual 'not-what-you-know-but-who-you-know' argument, quality is nothing without application.

Finally, the most positive observation voiced by our discussants was that participation in artistic activity at a grassroots level is reckoned to be at an all-time high, especially among younger generations. This basic participation leads to wider interest, a growing market value and recognition of the socio-cultural goals of these organizations. It is the raw material of the industry, and to stretch the metaphor, new seams are being mined every day. The sea of amateur filmmakers, bands, writers, artists and event-makers represents huge market growth, made especially visible when groups collaborate for large projects, such as festivals. To make economic and cultural use of a practically infinite pool of raw talent shows what my creative companies do best, and why they are among the few who have succeeded.

A call for clarity and vision

Through several millennia of Western aesthetic and economic thought, the basic identity of artist and of entrepreneur have remained elusive and still does. This is perhaps best illustrated in the conclusion of Hebert and Links' *The Entrepreneur* (1988). 'We may sacrifice realism on the one hand to gain precision, or we may give up precision on the other hand to gain realism. The choice we make determines the place of the entrepreneur in economic theory.' [1988: 159]⁹

This would suggest that the nature of the artist-entrepreneur is to slip through whatever cracks appear in any kind of intellectual structure we may erect to capture and study them. If they were not able to do so, there would be no aesthetic or economic 'frontier'

for them to explore and profit from. Clearly, this philosophy struggles to sit comfortably within government policy or a business plan. Reality without precision? Funding without statistics? Shades of grey? Phrases that would no doubt send a shiver down the spine of any risk-averse committee. Groups within education, health, and the police have all loudly complained of the creative-economic detriment caused by managerial hyper-accountability masking as democracy. Still, it would be rash to suggest that any organization spending taxpayer's money deserves the right to avoid articulating the value of its activities. The recent major UK Government commissioned report on the funding and governance of national art and culture – known as 'The McMasters' report', after its author¹⁰ – has been praised for arguing in favour of a step away from bureaucratic box ticking and funding-body micro-management and towards a pure ideal of cultural and artistic excellence. But then who does not strive for excellence in their work? Of course, artistic excellence is the ultimate enigma for a 'box ticker'; perhaps



Image courtesy of the Custard Factory

we should be content in trying to support activity that simply has the *attempt* at the core of its existence. The crucial factor then becomes one of who is appointed to judge the worth of this activity, and this in itself points to a need for excellence in leadership. The successful artist-entrepreneur manages to fulfil economic, social and cultural goals while avoiding the disadvantages and advantages of each area. Sadly, the increasingly multi-sector nature of the organizations means that their work will become harder to define using the measurements of any one sector. This also leads to a great deal of confusion in separating the 'big three' knowledge, creative and cultural industries. I would argue it is apparent that through the current dynamic of jostling between private-corporate business, public-social governmental, and voluntary-charity sector, the real economic vitality of this 'big three' is slowly beginning to

coalesce, bringing a more comprehensive approach to economic development and sustainable growth. The unifying deterrents for sectors that rely so much on speed and innovation are clearly inertia and risk-phobia. It is far too easy to venerate the final product while repressing the memory of the troubled starts, life-changing risks and generative processes of the emergent stage in business development, the 'stage' left to the performative courage of the artist-entrepreneur. The artist-entrepreneur is the one most equipped for these new economic configurations, and who must currently be tenacious enough to grow and not wilt in the enduring storms of economic recession. //

NOTES

- 1: Machlup, F. (1980) *Knowledge and Knowledge Production*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 2: Masuda, Y. (1990) *Managing in the Information Society*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 3: Where Donald Olsens' quote is clearly paraphrased in the main courtyard: 'The city IS a work of art'. See also Custard Factory founder Bennie Gray's various statements: www.spaceorg.co.uk/happen.htm; the Custard Factory is now just one of eleven projects run by Gray's organization, SPACE [Society for the Promotion of Artistic and Creative Enterprises].
- 4: <http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/Page.aspx?SP=1878>
- 5: Oberholzer, F. and Strumpf, K. (2004) *The Effect of File Sharing on Record Sales: An Empirical Analysis*, Camb. Mass.: Harvard Business School; Liebowitz, S. (2003) *Will MP3 downloads Annihilate the Record Industry? The Evidence so Far*, School of Management, University of Texas: www.utdallas.edu/~liebowit/intprop/records.pdf [accessed January 2009]
- 6: Brookes, D. (2001) *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, Cambridge: Simon & Schuster.
- 7: Banksy (2006) *Wall and Piece*, London: Century.
- 8: Rifkin, J. (2004) *The End of Work*, New York: Penguin.
- 9: Link, A. N. and Hebert, R. F. (1988) *The Entrepreneur*, New York: Praeger (2nd edition).
- 10: DCMS/McMasters, B. (2008) 'Supporting excellence in the arts' [The McMaster's Report], London: DCMS: http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/mcmaster_supporting_excellence_arts.htm [accessed January 2009]

REVIEW

Exhibitions as experiments

Lucy Kimbell

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The Organizations

During this article I have referred to the interviewees and individuals as general representatives of the industry sector rather than as specific companies. I extend a great deal of thanks to them for their participation and advice.

Capsule

<http://www.capsule.org.uk/>

Birmingham's most innovative art and music promoters, with the ears of true fans and a DIY commitment providing a regular flow of cutting edge, vital new music and art.

Craftspace

<http://www.craftspace.co.uk/page.asp>

Craftspace is a crafts development organization who actively attempt to push boundaries and perceptions of craft practice, presentation and learning.

Tindal Street Press

<http://www.tindalstreet.org.uk/>

Heralded as 'the excellent and far-sighted Tindal Street Press' (Independent), this prize-winning independent publisher offers readers the best of contemporary regional fiction.

Visual

www.visualforbusiness.com

Visual is a new, unique and flexible service from Arts & Business West Midlands bringing high quality contemporary art to businesses and their employees.

Many thanks to Lara Ratnaraja (Business Link West Midlands) and Peter Chandler (Leicester Creative Business Depot) for their insight and guidance.

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Photo: Richard Fletcher

An occasional visitor to Imperial College London, a university specialising in science, engineering and medicine, I am often drawn to the objects that are on display throughout the building. Come out of a lift, for example, and you are suddenly presented with some machinery in a glass case with all the gravitas of a museum piece, even though you are in a corridor. Despite a background in engineering design, I find it hard to 'read' these objects, but I welcome their being there. They serve to remind visitors and regular building users how scholarship and innovation are tied up with material artefacts. In my own institution, Said Business School at Oxford, which opened its first university museum in 1683 (the Ashmolean), we are starting to design our own collection of objects. Inspired by my colleague, business historian Chris McKenna, we are developing a collection of management artefacts, to be arranged around the business school, bringing to attention the technologies implicated in the work of managing and organising. From 2x2 matrices to early fax machines, we think it's important to make present the artefacts that have become invisible to many people, but without which managing and organising does not happen. This collection may not bear the historical weight of the objects in the Ashmolean, but like that museum, which was a site for public demonstrations of scientific experiments, we aim to use the exhibition format as a place of experiment (Macdonald and Basu 2007).

For practitioners and scholars interested in art and design, contemporary exhibition practice offers a valuable way to learn about, think about and experience art and design. Exhibitions can be sites for the generation, and not just the reproduction of knowledge (Macdonald and Basu 2007). Three exhibitions held in the UK in 2008 offer different ways to think about what exhibitions do, with quite different modes of engagement and argument.

