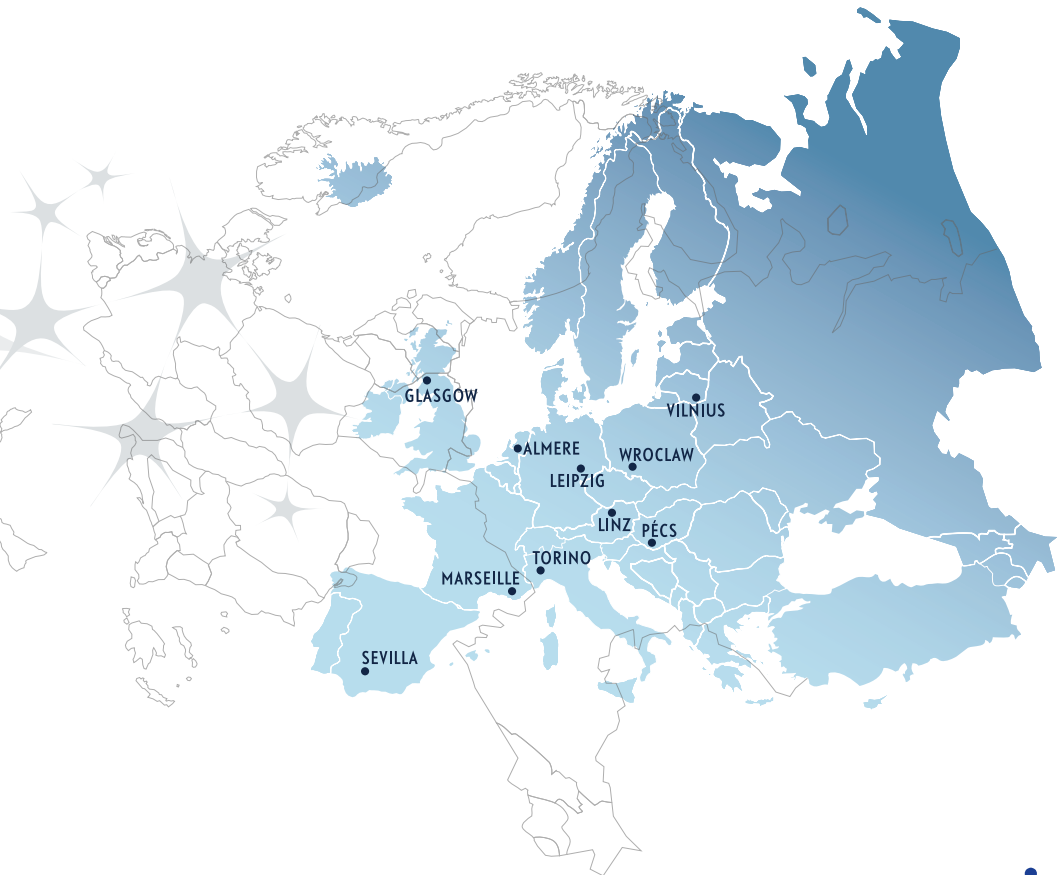



*European Year of
Creativity and Innovation*

Lecture series: EUNIC's Creative Cities





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INTRODUCTION

EUNIC's Creative Cities

Over the past six months SICA/Dutch Centre for International Cultural Activities and EUNIC Netherlands held ten lectures about European creative cities. These events revolved around the question: 'What makes a city a creative city?' The impetus for these series has been the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009*, which builds on creativity and innovation to encourage European citizens to participate in a culturally varied, knowledge-based society.

It turned out to be an unusually exciting series. In recent years the 'Creative City' has developed into a phenomenon and aroused considerable interest in many European cities and regions. The cities of Linz, Wroclaw, Turin, Pécs, Marseille, Glasgow, Almere, Seville, Vilnius and Leipzig have been rigorously scrutinised under the direction of Neil Wallace. This inquiry proves that there are many reasons for tapping the potential of a creative city, ranging from an innovative approach to dealing with the decay that resulted from a flagging automotive industry (Turin) to stimulating the refurbishment of a city, which resembled a devastated landscape after German reunification (Leipzig).

The ambitions of these cities were compared with the *EUNIC Criteria for a Creative City* that were developed for this series and which emphasise achieving a balance between spontaneous developments and systematic, planned activities. Achieving this balance is very challenging, especially if a city increases external pressures, for example, by promoting itself as a candidate for the title *European Capital of Culture*.

With this series, EUNIC aims to provide insight in the enormous potential of European cultural collaboration. The cooperating institutes – SICA, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Goethe Institut, Maison Descartes, and Instituto Cervantes – provided lodgings for the members from Austria, Poland, Italy, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, England, France, Lithuania and Spain.

There will certainly be a sequel to this series.

Arthur Sonnen
SICA/EUNIC

Amsterdam, November 2009

THE CULTURE OF CREATIVITY AS SOCIAL LEARNING

Stimulating the Cultural Cities Event by Inspiration from Regional Development

Paul H. Kersten

The methods used in regional development can provide inspiration to generate management tools for the cultural cities event. In general, creativity is seen as a reflection of cultural values, and an expression of identity. In the information society, creative groups that operate regionally, are seen to develop as new partners, creating new opportunities. On the other hand, cultural expressions presume creativity in order to express the meaning and alignment to the object of cultural expression.

Creativity increasingly draws attention to itself in recent scientific study. Psychology and cognitive sciences have a knowledge based tradition, but now also the fields of mathematics and neurobiology have contributed on how creativity affects intelligence, how it adds to mental health and to a resilient reconsideration of the ever shifting praxis of life. These new approaches aim to quantify creativity, but also, creativity is seen as a process that is enhancing new basic principles and new technologies. More and more authors concentrate on the social attitudes to creativity, being the start of renewal processes; revolutionary approaches to future demands.

The focus on creative cities started of in the eighties by the work of several authors who have been studying city marketing and the roots of urban renewal processes. In 1996, the English town of Huddersfield, a former woollen mill town, has sought to transform itself through its *Creative Town Initiative*. As one of the first cities to implement a creative town strategy, the *Creative Town Initiative* has been of deciding importance for creativity as a formal ingredient in civil government. In 1998, Manuel Castells wrote his influential *The Informational City: Economic Restructuring and Urban Development* (Castells, 1989), and is now widely respected for his contributions that have added to the understanding of social networking, highlighted in *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, (Castells, 1996). Elaborating on the theme, it has been Charles Landry who has subsequently written *The Creative City* (Landry, 2000), and *The Intercultural City* (Landry, 2007), followed by Richard Florida's focus on the *Rise of the Creative Class* (Florida, 2002). In the latter work Florida elaborates on city planning and marketing, constantly emphasizing the cultural dimension.

Other recent studies deal with creativity and transitions, seen as systematic formats for innovation. Such systems of creativity and transitions are therefore best understood as independent – but interconnected – developments that spark change in the fields of economy, culture, technology, institutes and nature & environment. These developments are characterised by complexity, that is explained by pointing at culture as a common and binding aspect.

It is *creativity* that epitomises that very aspect of society – not exclusively owned by an artist or performer, but seen as a formal and functional part of civil society. It is reflected in policy and government and as such, it has the potency to become an instrument of change. Recent studies underline the importance of the way a new generation appropriates and develops the multimedia world, thereby creating global relational networks that vigorously counter the indifferent and isolated world around us; a world that is slow and one-dimensional, a boring *non-place*.

A new, knowledge-inspired city policy that incites new ways of working, and generates creative participation, facilitates spatial clustering of various production chains (creative villages). The integration of various chains into clusters, leads to a different mode of regional development. It is based on combining knowledge of primary agricultural production processes, energy systems, and new developments in other areas (such as biomass and separation technologies). Best practices become best processes and mentoring becomes learning. Entrepreneurs evolve into alliance members and communication turns into involvement. As a network of knowledge, of shared creative force, people will now use each other's mental capacities to generate change, and give rise to new places to be and live in. These are the city's cultural hot-spots for growth.

Viewpoints on creativity can be distinguished on a more philosophical level:

- *Objective*, as (official acknowledged) cultural creativity
- *Subjective*, as individual performance
- *Intersubjective*, as 'groupthink' or community performance
- *Virtual*, as fantasy or virtual reality

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Each of these viewpoints acknowledges adopters and persons operating inside the knowledge contours of these different areas. Creativity emerges when routines for

change migrate from one viewpoint area to another. Then, a redefinition of knowledge must take place, other opinions and practices should be met, and new insights will arise. In times of crisis, these routines are often enforced by trends and 'Black Swan Events' that Taleb mentions in his book *The Black Swan* (Taleb, 2008); unforeseen occurrences that, looking at the course of events on hindsight, were inevitable. As the next generation thinks differently, and their adjustment to formal structures is more flexible, creativity is essential to ensure new routines towards a sound future.

To stimulate creative and cultural city development, the earlier mentioned 'change routines' can be stimulated. Not only by ways of communication, but foremost as 'technological rocket science' – out of the box thinking. As a next step, general applications may be distracted from the first 'impossible' solutions, and the cultural sector (with its traditional advantage in outgoing communication) will find suitable locations to perform experiments for implementing such applications. A new culture emerges, new users will productively interconnect, bringing about a cascade of creativity and applications. It is these concentrations and activities that inspire a larger social and economical network, increasingly propelling the city's general change.

Creative learning in culture-driven communities can be stimulated by using the characteristics that are derived from the above viewpoint areas. To stimulate the participation in an *Objective* environment, one should apply official representatives and formal statements as outcome of a congress to concentrate creative energy. For a *Subjective* environment this means the introduction of artists or gurus. In an *Intersubjective* environment, a lot of activities in community based networks is needed to generate movement of ideas. In the *Virtual* world a lot of virtual users (on the internet) are necessary to generate the momentum for notable change. Within these different methods communities and practices emerge. They will be using different toolboxes that are adapted to their needs for communication, enabling them to give meaning to change, build identity and practice the art of transformation. Creative learning strategies often show aspects of marketing, especially consumer to consumer marketing (C2C/B2B) and Brand New Marketing (Viral marketing, Affiliate marketing, Weblog and E-mail marketing or Advergaming). Another main characteristic of creative learning is the emphasis on processes of social learning in groups as these processes tend to create an open mode of communication in an exciting environment. In such environments, it is the task of facilitators to stimulate the creative process by using

multiple resources of knowledge and ideas. The community seeks for incubation of ideas and illumination. But there is also a need for 'innovators' to explain inventions and the new change routines to the outside world by means of verification and exposure.

To inspire the movement of *Cultural Cities* in Europe, the above mentioned research results can stimulate the yearly network events to expand into a social learning environment, building on the change routines' knowledge. This development includes a shift away from high attitude entrepreneurship towards a much more accessible way of working that aims on attracting people – not as passive individual visitors, but as networks participants. This new role means to infiltrate in communities and networks and to adapt to the rules in those environments. Often, participants will be working in an inviting open environment, having creative inspiration, academic supervision at their disposal for inspired learning processes. Then, only those who are really interested participate, and the laggards creates a theatre to experience the progress made.

It is important in times of crisis to show responsibility for the environment, and in a situation of economical predicament, society's processes are judged even more for their sustainability. The goal is to interest participants in the *Cultural City* event, and make goals tacit, open to influences by other participants. This means to specialise for emerging situations, and open purposeful innovations or transitions, so invite contributors from these new creative communities to the program. Then, participants will change from being mere individuals to entrepreneurs, enhancing them to contribute the programming of the event substantially. They will cherish a high level of cultural participation, whilst contributing to education, capital and professionalism. The facilitator should stimulate individual competence in adaptation, assertiveness and open-mindedness, and apply changes from the outside in order to change the internal management of the event. Also, they will optimise network capabilities and embedded cooperation in the event that becomes a new cultural highlight.

Next to the traditional and respected goals for the program, the management of these events should target the happening on strengthening of engagement of the cities communities, enhancing the use of techniques of imagination in the presentation of the event, as well as discovering opportunities of alignment with new groups outside the traditional or acknowledged cultural scene. Such an approach will combine the excitement of having fun and making the creativity of cultural mix work.

Experienced to work in different environments and intuitively using toolbox techniques that fit to these viewpoints, management staff may start to refine these techniques, admitting new communities to participate in unexpected change routines. This approach can lead to change the organisational structure and create a wholly new artistic vision on the event. But also it will persuade participants out of the shadows, inviting them to step into the magical virtual world of a new era.

Paul Kersten is Senior researcher Policy Analysis and Spatial Planning at Alterra, Wageningen University and Research Centre

EUNIC'S CREATIVE CITIES DEBATE

Neil Wallace

One of triggers for the EUNIC debates was the mounting speculation over 'what will happen' with the bids for *European Cultural Capital* title in the Netherlands in 2018. EUNIC decided to examine the concept of the *creative city* and the experiences of the *European Cultural Capital* series with which the phenomenon of creative cities is often linked.

From the moderator's perspective, one general truth was already clear by the second or third debate. And that is – as Tolstoy once said of happy and unhappy families – that successful creative cities all show similarities, but that cities struggling with the status of creative city or cultural capital struggle in their own particular way. What struck us in the case of Turin, Glasgow, Linz or Sevilla was a strange mix of pragmatism *and* faith in organic change which produced, amongst other things, an interesting form of realism in relation to cultural ambitions. These cities grasped the opportunities offered by conferred titles, but used them as the chief motor for a programme of urban change which had already begun, or was being imagined. For Leipzig, image change is a matter of remaining loyal to the city's great cultural history, coupled with genuine open dialogue with communities; so open that there appeared to be no need for a time-scale for cultural development or change.

At times it was difficult to tell whether we were discussing the creative city, or the phenomenon of *European Cultural Capital*. Rarely did I feel that this really mattered;

we had brought representatives of ten cities together to describe how creativity played an important part in the identity of their cities – present or future. The *Cultural Capital* experience was simply a more focussed way of telling that story, and for many, already a proving ground for the choices they had made.

What did we learn from these stories?

I think we have to consider the next four issues:

Aren't all cities creative? A tautology? Maybe so, but if we accept that all cities harbour some creativity, the secondary question arises: who appropriates that creativity and packages it as a product for the wider world? And what ends up in this package? In the debates we were constantly reminded that the voice of the individual artist or independent organisation is sometimes difficult to detect.

How do we handle the civic ego? A natural consequence of the above. The civic ego exists, as surely as political egos exist. It is a complex thing. Time and time again our debates ran into the same issues. Culture, the arts, the creativity in cities are seductive to politicians, consultants, image-makers, urban visionaries. A test for city managers is their ability to respect the primary creativity in their city, and to draw the right conclusions before defining development plans.

How are we doing on governance? A key question: how do we *organise* the creativity in cities, whether *European Cultural Capital* programmes or not? And how well do we deliver? How fit are the structures created to make and present programmes? The debates revealed, repeatedly, how difficult this is to do. The keys to success? A capacity to plan well, consult widely, and invest trust in independent organisation with a mandate to work professionally, with professionals, at arms' length from the political powers.

Are we prepared for surprises? Do master plans for culture – whoever produces them – ever really work? The EUNIC debates provided many examples to support Sikrol's unwritten law of unintended consequences: for every plan involving public expenditure or investment there will be unexpected developments. A telling factor was the stories – on the margins of our debates – of cities who were surprised not to receive the *European Cultural Capital* nomination, but proceeded to implement their cultural plans anyway.

Developing cities, in whatever way, through arts and culture is a coarse art, a rough magic in which all partners are to some degree, amateurs. In this respect there is nothing at fault with amateurism, but it points to a need to be wary of expertise in the field of the creative city. Both the stories of Turin and Seville, which began with a statement of civic pragmatism, seemed to show a degree of flexibility within the pragmatism of the approach: invest, see what happens, and react accordingly. Perhaps in this way some city authorities demonstrate an ability to shift from pragmatic cultural policies to more organic ones. But it is a rare gift.

Which leads us perhaps to the two most resounding messages from the debates. First: pragmatism is all very well, but in the realm of arts and culture it has to be founded on *something*. You can not develop what is not there in the first place. Second: if the creativity or the creative industries are important to the future of cities, then why wait for the outcome of a *European Cultural Capital bid*? Creative potential remains just what it is: potential. The question is whether the potential is fully understood, and exploited, in whatever context.

Neil Wallace is program coordinator at De Doelen and former deputy director at Glasgow European Cultural Capital 1990.

SUMMARY

In order to rationalise and quantify a city's 'creativity', the EUNIC members have defined seven criteria by which a creative city can be measured. Neil Wallace has implemented these criteria into the so called *Creative City Radial Graph*, a tool for visualising a city's creative strength. Furthermore, Wallace has summarised the ideas that were shared during the debates in a series of statements on the *Creative City* concept. These statements are not only a conclusion, but also a point of departure for further expanding the *Creative Cities Debate*.

EUNIC Criteria for a Creative City

Spontaneity and independence

Do artists and organisations work in an organic, independent cultural environment?

Participation

Does culture reach and involve "ordinary people" in the city?

Sustainability

Is the (political) commitment to culture sustained?

The culture of creativity

Is the city also "creative" in other aspects of its management?

Shared identity

"Yes, the city within which we live is creative"

'Black swans'

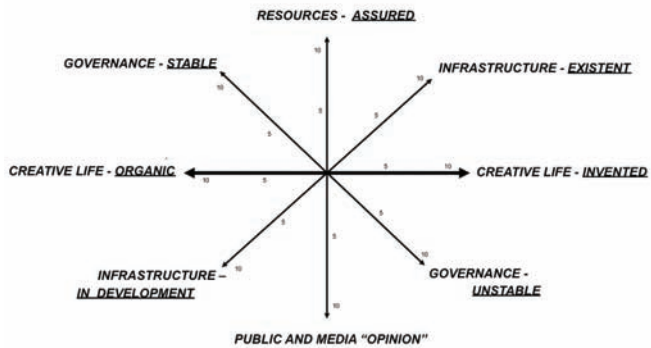
Critical incidents in city history which affected cultural life?

Investment planning:

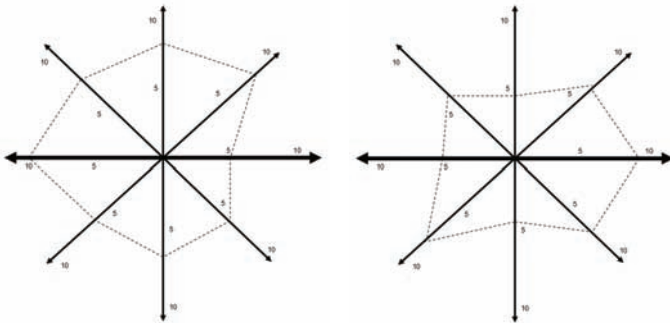
How is the balance between cultural and other kinds of investment?

The Creative City Radial Graph

These criteria are translated into a set of scales that form the axes in a diagram: the *Creative City Radial Graph*.



The scales in the *Creative City Radial Graph* measure the differences between cities, and a different graph will emerge for every new situation:



Creative Cities Debate

The urban personality

Cities have complex egos

Temptation

The arts and culture are seductive to urban bosses (planners, image-makers)

Creative city by decree

The discourse can ignore the essential characteristics of artistic and cultural life

Taking time

The organic dimension of time conveniently forgotten
("everything obeys the law of the farm")?

A rough magic

Cultural development at an urban level is a coarse art, especially in politically unstable environment

Amateurisme

In cultural development we are all amateurs...
...though some are more amateur than others

Sustainability

Does anybody get this right? (the "holy grail" in the creative city debate)

We can learn from cities which:

...recognise their potential but also their limitations

...respect the ambitions of artists and the cultural sector

...can plan well

...trust independent governance

...communicate and consult widely

...demonstrate a mix of pragmatism, and opportunism

...are not seduced by titles or posterity

EUNIC'S CREATIVE CITIES REPORTS

The Hunt for Creativity in Six Meetings and Ten Cities

Yvette Gieles

A city without ambitions slowly bleeds dry. More than ever before, cities are now embroiled in competing for knowledge and capital in their pursuit for national and international visibility and strategic rankings in networks. How can you ensure that your city becomes a magnet for all the necessary components that are required to secure a vibrant future? Authorities are overly enthusiastic when it comes to spurring on developments, but the question is whether these will have added value in the long term, for example in the case of the creative climate in a city. A blossoming artistic climate cannot merely be programmed on the authority of an alderman for culture, and the soul of a city is so much more than well-equipped buildings.

Good intentions alone do not make a creative city. Realising enduring urban ambitions at a cultural level is a complicated process, not least because it takes a great deal of effort to get everyone – residents, artists, investors and administrators – on the same page. This process does not always run smoothly. In general, the representatives of the ten cities in the SICA–EUNIC series about *European Creative Cities* were very frank about the obstacles they had to overcome and the concessions they had to make to prevent the premature demise of carefully crafted plans. Naturally, the public attending these meetings were also treated to flawless PowerPoint presentations, but not a single speaker risked hiding behind them during the probing interviews that followed the presentations.

The ten cities in the SICA–EUNIC series assign great importance to art and culture, but does this make them 'creative cities'? In some cases – Turin, Leipzig, Glasgow – this claim appears to be justified, although achieving this status was never a goal in itself. Other cities consider the quest for a new role in new times as an inspiration to invest in culture. They were intent on a creative strategy, but in this regard were sometimes astoundingly unoriginal. For example, many of the cities in this series consider the title *European Capital of Culture* as a valid reason to raise their cultural infrastructure to a higher level. Sometimes this works, because the programme is part of an inventive

and carefully drafted master plan that does justice to the city's identity. Unfortunately, in other cases, very little remains after the last European firework has fizzled out. Whatever the case, the experiences of (previous) *European Capitals of Culture* in this series provides enough food for thought for Dutch cities that aspire to the title in 2018, as well as for those who will soon have to evaluate the sizeable bid books.

“By 2009, culture is not enough... we need ‘creative culture’, ‘creative arts’, ‘creative business’, ‘creative economy’. Creativity is perceived as the ultimate solution”, stated Beatriz Garcia at the fifth meeting in this series. Garcia is a researcher at the University of Liverpool and is curious about what all these cultural interventions in a city actually produce. Creativity is fashionable. It attracts money and political attention. Yet the basis for claiming to be a ‘creative city’ is frequently unclear. Garcia rightly warns that the concept itself is in danger of being undermined. The same could apply to the interesting expansion of a specific urban cultural policy so that it becomes a more inclusive creative strategy that places the art sector in a meaningful framework. At the same time, one hopes that the space for the frequently unpredictable results of cultural processes will not be entirely subsumed by rigorously produced development plans with metropolitan allure. A city can probably never start too early with realising an ambition, but the art is in resisting the temptation to dictate everything from above.

Yvette Gieles is staff member at SICA, and reported on the SICA/EUNIC series *EUNIC's Creative Cities – The Creative Potential of European Cities*.



EUNIC's
Creative Cities

LINZ AND WROCLAW

The Compelling Power of a Title

Yvette Gieles

The concept *creative city* refers to the role played by culture in urban development. Riding on the wave of the knowledge economy, policymakers hope to bring dozy provincial towns back to life and to transform them into attractive, dynamic hubs of creative capital and innovative power.

The following ten cities are the focus of the series of six meetings: Linz, Wroclaw, Turin, Marseille, Vilnius, Pécs, Almere, Seville, Leipzig and Glasgow. To what extent are these creative cities? What distinguishes one creative city from another? Which approach truly enhances cultural value and what, on further consideration, doesn't really work at all? It is assumed that a cultural strategy precedes the title 'creative city'. This strategy defines the role played by culture in urban development and places the creative sector within the field of influence of political and economic stakeholders. Generating and channeling cultural energy is for many cities a complex balancing act. It is difficult to improve a city's social climate using the often unpredictable results of cultural processes. Rigid frameworks can restrict these processes, whilst too little control is likely to limit the applicability of the results as far as objectives outside the cultural sector are concerned.

The value of a title

The first session focuses on Linz in Austria and Wroclaw in Poland. These are two cities trying to work their way out of the shadow of a national capital city and a troubled past, partly by trying to create a modern and dynamic cultural profile. Part of the cultural strategy of Linz is the acquisition of the title *European Capital of Culture* in 2009. Wroclaw is putting itself forward as candidate for the title in 2016. The key issue in this session is therefore how the title *European Capital of Culture* fits in with the ambitions of a creative city. Glasgow, in 1990 the first non-capital city to be awarded the title, used it very strategically and successfully in a large-scale redevelopment project that rejuvenated the city. This approach was later followed by Dublin (1991)

and Lille (2004), amongst others, though not all *European Capitals of Culture* have left such an impressive mark.

The title *European Capital of Culture* is protected, whereas *creative city* is not. According to Ann Branch of the European Commission, award of the title should, through the extensive selection process, always be part of a long-term cultural strategy. There are also four years between a city being designated *European Capital of Culture* and the actual year in which it receives the title. In many cases, by the time the city and the programme become the centre of attention, the important local protagonists and responsible officials are long gone. Broad and strong support is essential in order to ensure sustainable investment in the title, and not just within the cultural domain. "We focused too quickly on the cultural projects. It would have been better if we had begun earlier with the organisation of the non-artistic aspects of the year, such as signposting in the city, the foreign language skills of hotel workers and taxi drivers and the accommodation on offer", says Ulrich Fuchs, artistic director of *Linz 2009*.

Linz, European Capital of Culture 2009

The *Linz 2009* programme is a varied parade of projects, from the inevitable boat trip on the Danube that attempts to make a cultural link between east and west, to artistically designed hotel rooms in former industrial sites. The section 'Kulturhauptstad des Führers' and a project on nature development in the former area of no man's land between Austria and what is now the Czech Republic also highlights the city's history. Fuchs calls this a kind of 'self analysis of the city', of interest not just to visitors, but certainly to the residents too.

Leading the organisation of *Linz 2009* are a German, a Swiss and an Austrian, none of whom come from the city. These three 'foreigners' have set a high standard as far as the quality of the projects is concerned. Many project proposals, in particular from the unorganised culture field, were not included in the programme. As a result, a local cultural movement developed in the margins of *Linz 2009*, which has published a compilation of rejected project proposals and plans to implement some of these projects. Ulrich Fuchs approves of this unexpected supplement to the official programme, though the partnership with large cultural institutes, such as the Ars Electronica Center, went much more smoothly. Fuchs finds it too early to comment on the success of *Linz 2009*. "It depends on how you define success," he says. "According to the local tourist office, January and February

Smart: Creativity and Innovation in Action, an exhibition during the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009)

The following pictures are part of the exhibition *Smart: creativity and innovation in action*. The Dutch Centre for International Cultural Activities (SICA) is presenting this travelling photo exhibition as coordinator of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in the Netherlands. The photographs are made by the Dutch photographer Maarten van Haaff. Visit www.europeesjaar.nl for the complete series of photographs of *Smart: creativity and innovation in action*.



The exhibition Smart: Creativity and Innovation in Action at the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Education and Science.

Design Academy, Eindhoven

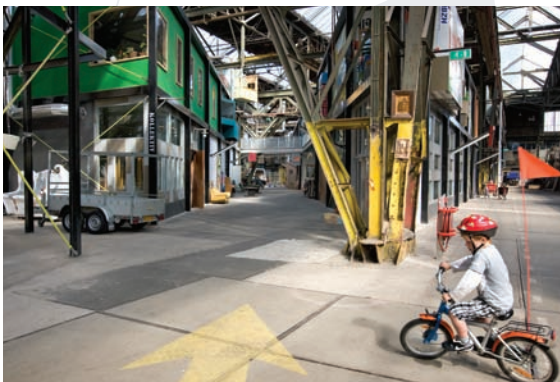
In the Design Academy Eindhoven the exchange of ideas plays a very important role. This exchanging of ideas is also reflected in the design of the building itself. In big light flooded areas in this building you will not find isolated, closed off class rooms. The whole



environment invites mentors and students to talk about creative and innovative plans which may have been yesterday's fantasy, but will surely shape tomorrow's reality. The Design Academy Eindhoven is housed in the White Lady (de Witte Dame), which once was the Philips Light Bulb Factory.

NDSM, Amsterdam

De NDSM-wharf, was once a shipping wharf on the embankment of the river IJ in North Amsterdam and is now becoming a centre for sub-culture. The 84.000m² wharf – approximately the size of 10 football fields – now offers space to various art companies and artisans. It is a safe haven for independent organisations, individual artists and artisans who



work together and inspire each other. This space is a creative hub and will help new partnerships to emerge in a new re-developed part of Amsterdam.

Kraanspoor, Amsterdam

Architect Trude Hooykaas's re-design of the old ship building dock Kraanspoor (built in 1952) is a striking example of industrial heritage meeting contemporary architecture. In this design Hooykaas used sustainable methods, for example the surface water



from the river IJ is used for climate control and so called 'grey' water is used to flush the toilets. The building itself can be used in a flexible manner: at the moment cultural companies are housed in it, but the building could be easily switched around to house people.

Creative Factory, Rotterdam

How do you stimulate creativity and innovation? In the Netherlands this is being done for example by developing what are called 'creative breeding spots': places where creative talents from various art disciplines work together, inspire each other and their surroundings. Often creative ideas emerge from this interaction. The Creative Factory,



in the Rotterdam harbour area, is an example of such a creative breeding spot. Since 2008 the old grain warehouse offers space to 65 creative companies covering five different art clusters: media, fashion, music, design and business services in the field of art.

What is creativity? What is innovation?

Creativity is a different way of using your ability to think. It's about thinking out of the box. Creativity is about valuable solutions, about optimising what already exists, and about creating totally new things. These new things we call innovations.

Through the 2009 theme year *Creativity and Innovation*, the European Commission wants to spotlight that creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are important drivers of personal development and economic growth.

By spotlighting and sharing good examples, writing about them and discussing them, the European Union contributes to the development of creativity and it stimulates the flexibility we need to boost innovative potential throughout the entire EU. This will help Europe to benefit from a well-developed knowledge economy and also empower us to foster our further progress.

The exhibition *Smart: creativity and innovation in action* shows what is going on in the Netherlands in the field of creativity and innovation. Many people know the role the Dutch company Philips played in research which led to important inventions. Many of these we use on a daily basis, for example in our mobile phones which work with chips invented in the laboratories in Eindhoven. In order to continuously develop new things Philips has created a new workspace where technicians meet together to find new solutions for new dilemmas. The exhibition also highlights other examples of Dutch companies pushing out the frontiers of knowledge, science and skills to find new solutions and new ways to meet contemporary demands. Just like these Dutch companies many other companies across Europe are also finding new ways of working together in order to stimulate creativity and innovation.

Many schools and museums are highlighting the importance of creativity in people's daily life. They show that creativity is a skill, just like writing reports, making presentations or riding a bike. You can develop this skill. With trial and error of course, just the way you would learn to ride a bike. First you look to see how it works, then you climb onto the saddle and off you go. By developing creative skills early in life, innovative thinking is triggered.

The exhibition is one of the official Dutch projects during the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.
www.europeesjaar.nl

were very quiet months, but from an artistic point of view they were fantastic. Better hotel figures meant the tourist office was much more positive about March, whilst it was in this month that a promising project failed to fulfil expectations.” Fuchs is more worried about the course to be taken once this year is over. During the run up to *Linz 2009*, and with the elections in mind (taking place at the end of 2009), the various authorities tried to outdo one another in terms of their involvement in the programme. Now, because of the same elections, they prefer decisions concerning the follow-up to the programme to be delayed. Fuchs is hopeful that projects such as the creation of an artist in residence placement later this year and the completion of a new opera hall in 2012 will ensure that *Linz 2009* will not be forgotten once the last firework has been fired.

Wroclaw, European Cultural Centre

Meanwhile, the Polish city of Wroclaw is preparing itself for its candidacy for the title *European Capital of Culture 2016*. In anticipation of the selection procedure result, the city has declared itself *European Cultural Centre*, where high quality cultural activities are given free rein. Festival after festival is organised across the arts, so many that even deputy mayor Obremski has warned it may reach saturation point, especially with a public that expects each new festival to be bigger and better than the last. The city is also investing in cultural infrastructure. Museums are being renovated and new facilities built. To the question whether all the ideas and initiatives come from the government or the cultural field, Obremski answers that the government does a lot, but also supports initiatives from the field: ‘The lack of private funds means that the position of the government is fairly dominant. Our efforts are partly focused on the generation of private resources. However, people do not automatically participate in community-based organisations in Poland. One of the ways in which we can stimulate the development of a ‘civil society’ is through the acquisition of the title *European Capital of Culture 2016*.

Wroclaw is convinced of the benefits the title *European Capital of Culture* confers, but is clearly in the early stages of a long process. It is a city in transition, still searching for a way to blend the various dimensions of its changeable history to produce a cultural strategy for the future. During the Cold War, Wroclaw was a centre for a radical underground movement in Eastern Europe and in the 1980s the dwarfs of the Orange

Alternative appeared, a light-hearted movement in reaction to the dominant 'red reality' of the Communist regime. There is at least no lack of creative energy. "Poles like symbols and that is why we like the title *European Capital of Culture*," says Alexander Gleichgewicht, project coordinator in the Wrocław Culture Department. He believes that in aiming for the title, he can activate all the creative energy in the city. The question is how this approach relates to the ambitions of the cultural field. Based on his experiences in Germany, with Bremen's failed attempt for the title *European Capital of Culture 2010*, Ulrich Fuchs of *Linz 2009* advises the development of an alternative strategy, "You must make sure all the momentum is not lost if you do not become the Cultural Capital of Europe." After all, the title can always be part of a cultural strategy, but can never replace it.

11 May 2009

Felix Meritis, Amsterdam

Moderator: Neil Wallace

With contributions by: Ann Branch (Head of Unit, DG Education and Culture, European Commission), Ulrich Fuchs (Head of Project Development and Deputy Artistic Director of *Linz 2009*, *European Capital of Culture*), Jarosław Obremski (Deputy Mayor, City of Wrocław), Jan Wais (Vice Director of the Foreign Affairs Office, City of Wrocław), Aleksander Gleichgewicht (Project Coordinator, City of Wrocław).

www.linz09.at

www.wroclaw.pl

www.ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm

TURIN

Out of the gloom and into the light

Yvette Gieles

The original capital of a unified Italy; the epicentre of the Italian Industrial Revolution and the home of Fiat; the birthplace of Italian film: this was Turin as it once was. The Northern Italian city has had to relinquish many of these attributes during the course of its history. But, in 2009, the city is once again capable of taking on the might of Rome and Milan. As a creative city, it also

attracts international attention. These are the results of an impressive process of transformation involving, as its most vital ingredients, a strong sense of cultural identity and the capacity for decisive government.

The alderman responsible for culture, Fiorenzo Alfieri, is the first to admit that he is not the most unbiased of commentators when it comes to his city's achievements. However, he proceeds to recount a convincing story about the manner in which a desire for beauty and creativity can be utilised to tackle the decline of a city. Something had to be done in Turin in the late 1990s. The city had been deteriorating as a result of an explosive growth in population and a hopeless crisis within the automobile industry, which was by far the area's biggest employer. Alfieri was given the responsibility of turning the tide, and so he developed a strategic plan in the course of two years which was supported by no less than fifty different parties. In the first place, he sought his inspiration abroad, in cities that were struggling with their own outmoded industrial character.

From manufacturing to creative industry

The strategic plan is the motor for processes of change in many different areas. One important goal is diversification of the local economy. Fiat is a major employer, but it is not healthy to rely too heavily on the waning giants of the manufacturing industry. Even without this car manufacturer the labour market in Turin should be large and varied enough to offer the local population work and opportunities for future development. The creative industries have now taken up residence in many old industrial buildings. Investment in facilities such as studios and workshops has led to the return of Turin's film industry, which had relocated to Rome after the First World War. Other former factory buildings now house a youth theatre and a centre for professional art courses, for example.

The strategic plan is also intended to stimulate administrative cooperation at a higher governmental level; the development of education and research facilities; the business climate and the quality of urban life. 'Turin as a city of culture, tourism, commerce and sport is a neat synopsis of the desired outcome of the entire transformation process, which is gaining ever more credence with the Torinesi themselves. Alfieri was understandably irritated by the headline 'The old Turin wins out' in the national newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. The article went on to claim that the city's crisis could

only be resolved with the help of the automobile industry. "Turin has truly moved into a new era, which is something that had to happen, as the golden days of the automobile industry are over", according to the alderman. Nonetheless, Fiat has made substantial investments within the framework of the strategic plan. Alfieri suspects that this is from a sense of contrition, as Fiat's troubles have clearly left their own mark on Turin.

The city as a school

Good cultural policy plainly involves more than simply assigning a cultural use to deserted factories or redesigning untidy parking lots into archaeological displays. Alderman Alfieri has a much higher goal in mind: "Cultural policy should transform the city into a school for a lifetime of learning. Culture is not only for the elite; it belongs to everyone. Education and participation are therefore very important, especially in the cities, because it is here that the complexity of modern life manifests itself in all its intensity." Naturally, the museums and the historical buildings in the city are clearly visible to all. However, the contribution made to the process by the cultural sector and in particular the smaller organisations is harder for Alfieri to evaluate. He prefers to allow independent experts to assess the interaction between the city government and non-institutional organisations. He does observe that the opportunities for young people in general and young artists in particular have radically improved in recent years. There is ample space for young artists to exhibit their work, and many of the younger inhabitants are proud of their city. The institutions of higher education attract more and more students from outside the city. Alfieri's wish list contains at least one more extensive project: a new public library. The plans have been drawn up, but until now there have been insufficient resources to execute the venture.

Culture and the Games

The allocation of the 2006 Winter Olympics to Turin was a decisive moment in the entire process of transformation. With admirable resolve, the city developed its candidacy once it became clear that Venice also had hopes to entertain the Games. "You can't ski in Venice, so that was a big chance for Turin", is how Alfieri explains the success of the bid book, which was both persuasive and ambitious. One of the traditional elements of the Games is the cultural Olympiad. In Turin, this led to an increased momentum in the development of the cultural infrastructure. This was based on a number of existing

festivals and facilities. For example, new life was breathed into the old Automobile Museum. After the Games, Turin continued to organise international events, such as the World Architects Congress (2008) and a large annual book fair. Naturally, the acquisition of the title of *World Design Capital* in 2008 was a welcome snub to the neighbouring city of Milan.

A lively city

“Never ask yourself if you have enough money. There is never enough available for these large-scale processes”. Alfieri refuses to be drawn on the amounts involved, but presents himself today as an inspired visionary. The mission that he embarked upon more than ten years ago was unambiguous: “Don’t allow this city to die”. This vocation gave him the platform with which to convince dozens of public and private parties to contribute to the necessary revitalisation of Turin. As a result, the city again speaks to the imagination of people both inside and outside Italy. This is the essence of the message he has to offer to other cities who dream of taking such a great leap forward: “Make sure that everyone asks themselves: How on earth did they manage that?”

10 June 2009

Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Amsterdam

Moderator: Neil Wallace

With a contribution by Fiorenzo Alfieri (Commissioner for Culture of the city of Turin)

www.comune.torino.it

PÉCS AND LEIPZIG

The art of regulating energy

Yvette Gieles

The third meeting of the series on creative European cities focused on the Hungarian city Pécs and the German city Leipzig. It is difficult to imagine two cities that are more dissimilar in their approach to the creative sector. In Pécs everything is determined by the programme for the 2010 *European Capital of Culture*. Leipzig is developing its cultural activities gradually. Both approaches contain interesting lessons for Dutch cities that likewise have ambitious plans for their cultural sectors.

Plan B in Pécs

What do you do if you encounter heavy weather on your voyage and there are no other ports to divert to? In a nutshell this describes the situation that the Hungarian city Pécs faces while preparing the programme for 2010, the year in which the city can claim to be the *European Capital of Culture*. The initiators of the event wanted to appoint an artistically minded and prominent director with a clear vision, who would make bold choices and ensure original programming. Two suitable candidates were selected, but neither of them met with the new mayor's approval – so much for the idea of a strong-willed director. The designation *European Capital of Culture* allows no reprieve, however, and 2010 is approaching at a rapid pace. A hybrid commission comprising representatives from the cultural sector and local government compiled the programme. The result? "It represents an amalgam of various choices that is possibly a little too ambitious", admits Agnes Simon, head of international relations for *Pécs 2010*.

Other preparations are also not going entirely according to plan. The prestigious Pécs Conference and Concert Centre will only be ready for use in October 2010 at the earliest, and the current financial crisis is an obstacle to the sorely needed investment required to improve the quality of local hotels. And all this after such a promising start. Defeating ten other cities under consideration, Pécs was awarded the title following an arduous contest spanning several rounds. The greatest rival was Budapest. According to Simon, Pécs was eventually selected because of its plans for cross-border projects and its emphasis on the regional dimension. It was especially the latter that resulted in Pécs being chosen instead of Budapest, which is regarded as the symbol of centralisation.

The perspective after 2010

Glossy folders and snazzy, well-edited film clips with stirring music aside, it remains difficult to gain a clear idea of the significance of *Pécs 2010* for the cultural life in the city and the region. The path of development closely resembles a construction plan. What will remain in Pécs after 2010 is a cultural infrastructure that might be a few sizes too large for a city with less than 160.000 inhabitants. An amount of 22 million Euro has been reserved for the *European Capital of Culture's* artistic programme for the period 2007–2010, but the question is: will funding still be available for ongoing

programming and will all the buildings be used afterwards? Simon tries to be optimistic: “We want to ensure that none of the buildings are left unused, as happened in Graz (*European Capital of Culture in 2003*). And it looks as if this might succeed. In fact, only the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, a redeveloped area around the porcelain factory of the same name, is a source of concern. After 2010, it will become difficult to maintain the extensive series of festivals set up over the past few years. Some of them will have to return to the level they started at and I hope that the others will be able to tap new sources of funding.”

The last-minute rush for a title

The reluctant candour with which Agnes Simon offers a glimpse into the organisation of a future *European Capital of Culture* raises enough issues for consideration by cities in the Netherlands that are aspiring to this title in 2018. The rivalry between these cities has slowly become evident in recent months because of increased media attention. This increasing media interest also appears to feed the fiery cultural rhetoric that some cities are using to emphasise their suitability as a candidate. But obviously this type of showdown is never gratuitous. The main thing is to ensure that no energy and goodwill are squandered when the title is awarded to a different city. Even after being awarded the title the problems remain complicated, as demonstrated by *Pécs 2010*. Especially the ‘now or never’ character of a title such as *European Capital of Culture* has a great impact on the momentum and direction of creative processes in a city. Sometimes it is better to remain patient, but who can remain calm with a deadline on the horizon? After all, there has to be something to see in the year that the city can claim to be the cultural capital of Europe, and you hope that all eyes will be focused on your city and programming.

Leipzig gains momentum

The developments in the German city of Leipzig are at least as instructive for Dutch planners as those in Pécs. Like Pécs, Leipzig is a city that is rediscovering itself after forty years of East bloc socialism. But Leipzig has all the time in the world, because its cultural development is not being pressured by deadlines or events with an international appeal. This does not mean that nothing is happening in Leipzig. On the contrary: the city is the cradle of Western classical music and has become an appealing location for contemporary creative industries such as game development and design. Recently the

city council adopted a cultural development plan in close consultation with the cultural sector. Furthermore, the plan develops initiatives by cultural producers at various locations in the city and appears to have no other ambition than to create a robust channel through which creative potential – which has been blocked for several decades – can flow once more.

Heiderose Hesske of the Leipzig municipality regards this approach as suitable for a city where the inhabitants have always been closely involved in culture and their city. The cultural development plan must be more than merely a city's marketing strategy. "We appreciate its value, but we are trying to ensure that the city's marketing strategy does not define our cultural strategy", says Hesske, continuing, "In fact, I still wonder if we truly are a creative city." In the meantime, sections of the creative industry have made significant inroads in the local economy. In a city with over 15% unemployment this is no mean achievement.

There are many roads to the creative city

The gradual approach adopted by Leipzig or the pressure cooker that Pécs has become: there is no blueprint that guarantees a consistently successful cultural strategy. The best approach depends on the aspirations and local conditions. Moreover, nothing is as stubborn as cultural practice. The challenge is to develop a strategy that provides enough room for the cultural dynamic in a city to express itself so that you can eventually distil the basic ideas for a programme for an event such as a *European Capital of Culture*. Time is a key factor and patience a crucial virtue. As a city you can never start preparing early enough to realise a goal, but there is an art to resisting the temptation to prematurely fill in all the blanks.

9 September 2009
Goethe Institut Amsterdam
Moderator: Neil Wallace

With contributions by: Agnes Simon (Head of International Relations Pécs Cultural Capital of Europe 2010) and Heiderose Hesske (Deputy Head of European and International Affairs, City of Leipzig)

<http://en.pecs2010.hu>
www.leipzig.de

ALMERE

A City Primed for Action

Yvette Gieles

During the fourth meeting on 16 September about *Creative Cities*, the mayor of Almere Annemarie Jorritsma officially announced the city's hopes of becoming the *European Capital of Culture* in 2018. This means Almere will have to deal with some significant challenges. Due to its lack of a multi-faceted urban culture, the city's current cultural appeal is almost non-existent. This has to change, but how?

"We would never have thought of this ourselves, but it's actually a good idea", says Jorritsma, defending the city council's decision to act on the initiative of a group of the city's residents and develop it into a nomination for *European Capital of Culture* in 2018. It took the bench of Mayor and Aldermen more than three years to arrive at this decision, which can perhaps be construed as indicative of Almere's changing character. Everything in this *New Town* starts off on the drawing board, which compounds the difficulty of evaluating ideas that are widely supported by the city's inhabitants.

The Almere city council will have to get to grips with the initial proposal at the beginning of 2010. This plan will be the result of an intensive study, with Bert van Meggelen, former director of Rotterdam *European Capital of Culture* 2001, as the most important advisor. Van Meggelen gained a great deal of experience in developing convincing creative programming for a city that did not have a prominent cultural profile at first and where conservative forces had started to dominate local politics. These are factors that Almere also has to consider at length.

Pioneers and conservatives

Alderman for culture, Arno Visser, explained that the ideas about the development of Almere have resulted in two tendencies that are competing for pre-eminence: the pioneering spirit that shaped the city's development, and a growing desire to curtail the city's expansion and allow no room for the new or unfamiliar. Or as a

councillor once expressed it: "Residents of Almere want the environment that was once promised to them." But Almere continues to grow and is starting to assume the characteristics of a large city that many residents hoped to escape from by moving there. The first vagrant was sighted about five years ago and domestic violence has become a serious problem. This contradicts the fact that it is especially the middle class who still feels most at ease in Almere. The city has considerably less to offer to those people who do not fit the profile of 'the hardworking Dutchman' or 'Average Joe'. This has to change.

Rising above mediocrity

In order to facilitate an urban culture, Almere first has to secure the vital precondition of diverse groups being visibly active in the city. And it does not matter if a few people get rubbed up the wrong way. "Almere is not so much a city of middle-class people, but of mediocrity, says urban sociologist Arnold Reijndorp. This can partly be attributed to the uniformity of the provisions and the architecture: "This city could do with some dilapidation, although obviously criticisms about its bourgeois character are not entirely fair. It would be an absurd idea to deliberately create a rundown neighbourhood, and anyway, nobody would accept it." Reijndorp is apprehensive that the leap of scale that Almere intends to make – from 180.000 to 350.000 inhabitants in 2030 – will lead to more noticeable diversity. How much room does this ambitious urban planning scheme allow for the gradual development of an urban atmosphere where all manner of problems could arise? A lot depends on the image the city wants to project of itself. There are some people who probably do not identify with the local folklore about sea clay and the pioneers. Reijndorp: "As someone from Rotterdam I have also had enough of the 'rolled-up sleeves' mentality that is often used to describe the local state of mind."

The empty space

"That there are boundaries to the manufactured city is something we encountered in our ambition to combine top-class and recreational sports, for example", says alderman Visser, in an underhand reference to the vestiges of the *NV Omniworld* fiasco. The soccer club *FC Omniworld* is a fair to middling first division team, but it is certainly no Ajax. Visser is currently searching for a structure that will spur local groups to action, without too much intervention from above. This as yet undefined

space will have to appeal to the creative sector, but is that enough? The physical environment is important, but it is particularly the local public that determines if a place is appealing or not. This is Almere's problem. It has all the space in the world, but the structure of the city lacks 'early adaptors' and critical devotees of art and culture. Right now Almere is not an obvious location for innovative cultural activities. Amsterdam is the most appealing cultural crowd-puller in the region, much to Visser's obvious dismay.

Ramble or plan?

Almere would very much like to discard its status as a satellite town of the capital city. Local residents consider it a city in its own right, with its own nascent identity. The city needs a high-quality cultural sector, preferably with several institutions that enjoy national or international allure. There is plenty of ambition, but which is the best route to achieving this? A winding, half-paved path or a dead straight polder road with an occasional roundabout to provide a bit of variation? Perhaps a bridge across the IJmeer would make a difference and you could use city's proximity to Amsterdam to your advantage. Or do you simply start walking towards a hypothetical goal and see where you end up? For the time being the greatest problem confronting the city council is reigning in its conditioned planning reflex.

The other important question relates to the suitability of the title of *European Capital of Culture* for the as yet to be developed creative strategy. *New Town*, a leap of scale, differentiation, a unique identity; Bert van Meggelen thinks that the points of departure for a favourable nomination should also make an impression from a European perspective: "Almere is a prime example of a new type of urbanisation. Even though it is verdant it is not a suburb of another city. It is a city in its own right, with all the associated social challenges. Many European cities are struggling in their quest to become a 21st-century city. Almere is a perfect test case in this regard."

16 September 2009

Schouwburg Almere

Moderator: Felix Rottenberg

With contributions by: Arno Visser (Alderman for culture, City of Almere), Arnold Reijndorp (Professor of Socio-Economic and Spatial Developments in Urban Areas

at the Faculty of Social and Behaviour Sciences at the University of Amsterdam), Henk van Aswegen (director of the Milton Keynes Discovery Centre, UK), Tom van Gestel (senior curator at SKOR and head of the artistic team of Beyond Leidsche Rijn), Bert van Meggelen (director Rotterdam European Cultural Capital 2001)

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www.almere.nl

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GLASGOW AND MARSEILLE

From neighbourhood to neighbours

Yvette Gieles

The way in which the Scottish city Glasgow in 1990 made use of the title *European Capital of Culture* to bring about the development of the creative city set the tone for other cities. Almost two decades later, city councils are facing different challenges from those that Glasgow had to cope with. This has also resulted in ongoing gradual changes to the themes of a *European Capital of Culture*. This is evident from the preliminary plans being drawn up by Marseille-Provence, which has been named *European Capital of Culture 2013*.

After almost two decades, the Glasgow *European Capital of Culture* 1990 event remains an important point of reference for cities that have subsequently been awarded the title. As the first non-capital city, Glasgow made strategic use of the title to effect wide-ranging redevelopment, which meant that the city could be dragged out of the mire and emerge from Edinburgh's shadow. By doing this, Glasgow gave a new dimension to the phenomenon *European Capitals of Culture*. Cities can no longer get away with merely organising bland cultural events that incorporate trendy co-productions imported from elsewhere in Europe. Ever since, emphasis has been placed on developing the nominated city's cultural potential and robust local networks that continue to grow even after the event has ended.

Volcanic forces

Glasgow 1990 was a trailblazer within the framework of the *European Capitals of Culture* project. According to Beatriz Garcia, a researcher at the University of Liverpool, the factors that contributed to its success still provide valuable insights for cities striving to create an ambitious creative strategy. According to Garcia, the most valuable lesson was “Learn your basics and understand your cultural infrastructure.” A vital factor that contributed to Glasgow’s success was that the city already was home to a creative industry of considerable scope long before the city even started preparing its cultural strategy for the 1990 event. “Culture was not something that had to be invented, it was more a question of operating carefully to ensure that the process would not be imposed from above”, says Garcia. Robert Palmer, the director of *Glasgow 1990*, compared his task to ‘managing a volcano’. Serious budgets and flexible programming, which includes a wide-ranging selection of events that appeal to ‘difficult’ target groups who persistently steer clear of culture, were all factors that contributed to its success. A can-do-attitude evolved in the city and it seemed as if the residents had cast off any doubts they may have had about the social significance of art and culture.

New challenges for old cities

The lessons of Glasgow have lost little of their relevance; nevertheless, the challenges confronting cities at the beginning of the 21st century are different from the problems that Glasgow had to deal with. In the meantime, most old cities have dealt with their urban decay and have been refurbished. Many large cities have also managed to temper the exodus of the middle class and some of them have stated that they have seen a gradual increase in their populations. Space, accessibility, air quality, safety and international competitiveness are among the issues that city councils must respond to. This is the century of the metropolis and the knock-on effects of this will also gradually impact on the significance and configuration of the phenomenon *European Capital of Culture*.

Familiar experiences

The events in *Glasgow 1990* and *Marseille-Provence 2013* will be separated by 23 years. At first, the experiences of Julie Chenot, from the French organisation, sound familiar; the organising committee wants to put the city on the map and use high

quality programming to shake off its outmoded image. The city council envisions hills of gold, swarms of tourists and remedies to a variety of social problems in the city. Many residents and the local cultural community regard the event as a pretext to give the city a make-over, which will result in the bulldozing of much that is valuable and a flood of expensive initiatives that often do not originate in the city itself. Now, one year after being selected as the *European Capital of Culture* for 2013, ongoing discussions in Marseille are not concerned with the type of city Marseille should become, but are more about who can make a claim on the various budgets. In the meantime, the artistic director's position is being undermined and large and small organisations with their own strategies are trying to worm their way into the programming. Not that the residents of Marseille are observing this process with much interest. The director of *Linz 2009* had already warned his colleagues in Marseille that genuine enthusiasm for the event is hard to come by. Chenot still has complete confidence that it will all work out in the end.

A new perspective

The process in Marseille is laborious and much has yet to be agreed upon and organised. Still, there are factors that distinguish this French city from Glasgow, starting with the nomenclature. *Marseille-Provence 2013* will not only revolve around the city of Marseille on the Mediterranean coast. The event and especially the measures that are introduced to ensure its success must create a momentum that contributes to more robust connections between a number of larger cities and the many smaller population centres in the Marseille metropolitan area. Unlike *Glasgow 1990*, the relationship between the city and the surrounding countryside is the focal point, not the city. Chenot concedes that Marseille, being a port, has somewhat neglected the surrounding countryside. The main cities in the area, Arles, Aix-en-Provence and Toulon, have never been eager to cooperate with Marseille because of its shabby reputation regarding civil administration. Meanwhile, Marseille, the second largest city in France, has managed to deal with its most challenging problems and the atmosphere of dilapidation in the city has made way for a more stimulating climate. The city was once the gateway to French colonies in North Africa. Now the future of Marseille is being shaped through its cooperation with the surrounding locations and is reconsidering its interaction with the Mediterranean region.

Political priorities

It is particularly this Mediterranean dimension that gives *Marseille-Provence 2013* political overtones that clearly transcend the city's priorities. In an EU context, the Sarkozy government has committed itself to the Union for the Mediterranean, which is aimed at improving the economic, political and cultural ties between the EU and its southern neighbours. By associating the bulk of its programming for the *European Capital of Culture 2013* event with this topic, Marseille does not have to worry too much about the European relevance. There is a danger, however, that the city's residents will not identify with the programming. The organisation of *Marseille-Provence 2013* creates the impression that they are aware of this. A smattering of political opportunism that will focus attention on local potential? An artistic-political approach must showcase the creative forces in the city: "We do have artists in Marseille and some of them are really good, but they are generally unrecognised. Something outstanding has to happen to lure people from Paris to the south", says Chenot.

Supra-municipal and international

By explicitly choosing a supra-municipal scale and international ties, *Marseille-Provence 2013* links up with *Lille Nord-Pas de Calais 2004*, *Ruhr 2010* and possibly even *Istanbul 2010*, because with twelve million residents, the Turkish city is a perfect example of a metropolis. These are examples of cities that are trying to expand the boundaries of the *European Capital of Culture* project, mainly because of their locations. For many cities, regional cooperation is self-evident and indispensable when it comes to urban development, and this also applies to creative cities. The local cultural infrastructure still forms the point of departure, but it is not limited to only one municipality. The new *European Capital of Culture* covers several locations in an urban environment, so that, according to Marietta Pieckenbrock of *RUHR 2010*, "artists in the area will operate as if it is a single city".¹ From the urban development for *Glasgow 1990* to the formation of creative agglomerates in the 21st century: creative cities do not feel hampered by the title *European Capital of Culture*, but regard it as an appealing framework for the wide-scale exploration of suitable creative strategies for the cities of the future.

1 Berg, Simon van den, *Van industrie naar cultuur: RUHR.2010*, in SICAmag, no. 40, p. 17.

23 September 2009
Maison Descartes, Amsterdam
Moderator: Neil Wallace

With contributions by Beatriz Garcia (University of Liverpool) and
Julie Chenot (*Marseille-Provence 2013*)

www.marseille-provence2013.fr
www.glasgow.gov.uk
www.beatrizgarcia.net/research.htm

VILNIUS AND SEVILLE

Rays of hope at the periphery

Yvette Gieles

Vilnius is the 2009 *European Capital of Culture*, but the organisers are not having an easy time of it. The financial crisis resulted in drastic cuts in the programme budget, which caused a great deal of consternation in the city and meant that some proposals had to be scrapped. In Seville the euphoria of the 1992 *World Exposition* has gradually dissipated. Both cities should now reflect on these experiences and perhaps even consider different roles for their city councils.

“It’s a nice film clip, but it no longer reflects the current state of affairs”, says Rasius Makselis (Ministry of Culture, Lithuania), stopping the DVD halfway. Vilnius presents itself as the vibrant 2009 *European Capital of Culture* in the promotional film, but the financial crisis has had a devastating effect in Lithuania. It was with mixed feelings that the residents of Vilnius watched the enormous firework display that heralded the year of the *European Capital of Culture* on New Year’s Eve 2008. The national airline company was on the brink of bankruptcy, the economic prospects were becoming more sombre by the day and many people feared for their jobs. There is an element of self-mockery in this. The fireworks may have been expensive, but at least there was something with a Lithuanian signature that ascended to the heavens that evening.

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Vilnius as the *European Capital of Culture* 2009 has not fulfilled expectations. The end of the year is in sight, probably to everyone’s relief, because cultural

events that have had their budgets halved just before they have started usually end up in a mire. Makselis acknowledges that in January the prospects for the year were miserable and the atmosphere in Vilnius reflected this. But he is reluctant to label the entire project as a waste of time. The components of the programme were satisfactory and, to Makselis' delight, reactions to some of them were different from those that were expected. This spontaneity was extremely welcome. Makselis: "Much of the programme was dictated from above, with sections for artists and a little something for the inhabitants. That's the way bureaucrats deal with this type of event." The artists eventually played a more pronounced role in the programming than is apparent at first, but this does not mean that they have the feeling that they are also 'owners' of the entire event. Makselis is honest about this: "The lack of activities that developed organically is very problematic. It is disconcerting to read newspaper articles by artists criticising the programme." But this opposition has produced results. As artists organise themselves the authorities and the cultural industry are starting to understand their mutual value and how they can interact. This is a bonus in a city where, until just before the crisis, real estate agents benefited the most from the post-Soviet situation.

Restoration

It is not surprising that a gulf separates the free spirits from the established order in a country that has been rediscovering itself after unshackling itself from the Soviet Union in 1990. The initial cultural priorities of the burgeoning democracy focused on restoring the national glory from the period preceding the Russian annexation. Inhabitants and artists are less afraid of the legacy of 50 years of Soviet rule and the Cold War, as is evident from the erection in Vilnius of the world's first statue of Frank Zappa and the efforts to reanimate the Uzupis artists colony. This homage to Zappa may seem strange in the West, but his music represented the freedom denied to inhabitants in East bloc countries. The Uzupis community initiated the idea of the Zappa statue. During the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow all 'undesirable elements' from the Russian capital were relocated to this district in Vilnius. A vibrant artistic community developed in Uzupis that will become part of a creative cluster in the capital in the future.

Behind the folklore

Seville is also grappling with ghosts from its past. According to Pablo Juliá, the director of the Andalusian Centre of Photography, the capital city of Spanish Andalusia has had enough of its folkloristic image, which is centred on flamenco and the colourful rituals celebrated on Catholic feast days. Seville attributes this image to romantic writers who were enchanted by folk traditions they did not understand. It is also the image that Franco was so fond of: a cheerful Spain, with Andalusia as a flamenco paradise. Artists had already started challenging this image during the Franco regime, and the efforts of some landed them in jail. There was a restoration of democracy after Franco died in 1975. Freedom became the motor of creativity, which led to an unbridled anarchic explosion of culture. This initial euphoria dissipated in the 1980s. The political transition was successful, but the city could not shake off its traditional image, which has resulted in the stagnation of the city's ongoing development.

A leap forward

The organisation of the *World Exposition* in 1992 was an opportunity for Seville to prepare itself for the 21st century in one fell swoop. It is thanks to the efforts of Prime Minister Felipe González, a native of Seville, that the city took control of an operation that resulted in wide-ranging cultural events and a radically modernised infrastructure. The *World Exposition* was a success and in Pablo Juliá's opinion, possibly the last important *Expo* that the world has seen to date. Afterwards, some researchers decried the absence of an exemplary long-term strategy. Seville has enjoyed an international reputation since the *Expo*, but many tourists now search in vain for their own country's pavilion. Only about 23 of the originally 112 country pavilions in the *Expo* are still standing. At the time, sustainability was not an important consideration for the organisers of the event. And anyway, was it not the high-speed rail connection with Madrid that ended Seville's isolation and gave the city the necessary impetus? Juliá is critical: "Nowadays many people can live from culture, but perhaps the authorities have established – and continue to maintain – too many facilities. The selection process could be more stringent, with a greater focus on quality." The city of Seville still has total control, but this statement by Pablo Juliá suggests that it is especially this 'enlightened

despotism', which propelled the advances in the city, that is now impeding the entrepreneurial spirit and innovative drive of cultural institutions.

Positioning

The city councils in Vilnius and Seville are determined to use the vestiges of their traumatic histories to reinvigorate their cities. Taking direct control accelerates the complex processes involved, which ensures that the momentum achieved after a significant event – the death of a dictator or regained independence – is not lost without producing tangible results. In all this confusion, what can be viewed as a positive outcome? A new opera building, a branch of two important museums, increasing tourism, or a flourishing cultural industry that can finally spread its wings and demonstrate that a city's soul is so much more than constructing a series of well-equipped buildings? And how do you proceed after the initial objective has been attained? Organising large-scale cultural events often puts local relations under pressure. Once the dust has settled, it is time to forge well-balanced coalitions that will contribute to the city's ongoing development. When Vilnius reviews its 2009 *European Capital of Culture* project a sense of disappointment will dominate. But the event does appear to have fostered a better understanding on the part of the authorities regarding the roles of artists and culture in a city. And perhaps the best thing the authorities in Seville could do is to take some distance from the *Expo* to ensure that there is enough room to allow the aspirations and priorities of the cultural field to develop.

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