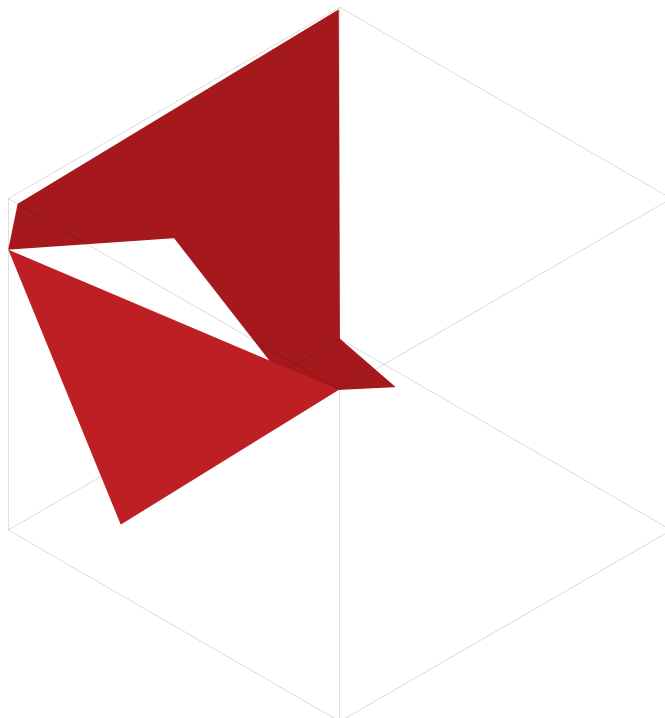


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Aspirational Art Centres and the Post-Industrial City

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Abstract: This paper investigates the specific characteristics that inform post-industrial centres for contemporary art and their place within arts-led urban redevelopment projects. Focusing on Gateshead's 'Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art', which opened amidst much fanfare in 2002, it argues that the recent trend towards converting hitherto-derelect industrial sites into contemporary art institutions represents a significant paradigm shift within both the history of non-collecting contemporary art centres, as well as in the manner in which these sites are experienced. At the heart of this paper is the idea that 'Baltic' represents a key example in what will be termed a 'centrifugal' art space; one whose design and function seeks to continually reinforce its impact upon the city's aspirational tendencies.

Keywords: Art centres, contemporary art, gentrification, arts-led urban regeneration, Gateshead, post-industrial architecture, re-imagining, Capital of Culture, exhibitions

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Introduction

In 2002, on the banks of the River Tyne, a large crowd of onlookers gathered to witness the (re)opening of a regional landmark: the £46 million, ten-year conversion of the hitherto derelict Baltic Mill into 'Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art' (Figure 1). As merely one example of the countless new art and cultural institutions that were opened amidst the frantic 'museum boom' that occurred during the later part of the twentieth century, the opening of 'Baltic'¹ did not elicit much in the way of specialised analysis; with the majority of texts happy to link it architecturally to London's Tate Modern Museum (Cork, 2002; Cumming, 2002; Hickling, 2002; Sieghart, 2002; J. Taylor, 2002; Willoughby, 2002) or liken its projected 'effect' upon the region to that of Bilbao after the arrival of the Guggenheim (Binney 2002, p.37; Gayford 2002, p.19; Minton 2003, p.4; Ward 2002, p.7; and Willoughby 2002, p.12).



Figure 1. The *Opening* of Baltic. Exterior shot of the building, October 2001.
Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.

Although there are certainly parallels that can be drawn between these projects, what differentiates Baltic is that it had no intention to become, or align itself with, a collecting institution; instead attempting to develop its own identity within the region. In this regard, the fact that the Baltic project was solely measured against its ability to attract and generate financial and cultural capital is all the more interesting, as it represents a larger shift within the history of non-collecting contemporary art centres. This was a moment in which they ceased being seen as peripheral or exclusive organisations and instead assumed a degree of institutional authority comparable to large-scale, collecting art museums. Considering this, it may appear all the more surprising that there has not been a more in-depth architectural or institutional study of Baltic. However, as this paper makes clear, the degree to which the story of Baltic is inseparable from the larger regeneration of the Quayside is in fact a key marker of the success of this type of institution; which seeks to absorb the region's wider aspirational tendencies and project them outwards. This results in what will be termed a 'centrifugal art centre'; a unique type of institution whose entire design is geared towards reinforcing its relationship to



the entrepreneurial desires of the city. By analysing the design of Baltic in this manner, this paper will conclude by arguing that, rather than being simply a subsidiary clone of the Tate-/Bilbao-paradigm, Baltic can in fact be viewed as the most aspirational art institution of them all.

History and Background of the Baltic project

The most obvious difference between Baltic and the Tate Modern is that, unlike London, neither Newcastle nor Gateshead were viewed as cities with strong links to contemporary art. Indeed, for many people, 'Geordie culture' was synonymous with the working-class pursuits of football and drinking: 'gannin' the match, Bigg Market drinking, having a 'laff' (Nayak, 2003, p.20; see also Osmond, 1995). Of the two major centres that face each other across the Tyne River, Newcastle has always been regarded as the more prosperous; its wealth resulting from a more effective commercial use of its riverbank (Hickling, 2002, p.12). Gateshead, on the other hand, had no such luck. Even when it was economically thriving—first through coal in the seventeenth-century, followed by the railway in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries (Taylor & Lovie, 2004, pp.3-4)—Gateshead always carried the stigma of being an unattractive urban centre; as witnessed by the remarks of J. B. Priestly, who noted in 1934 that: 'the whole town appeared to have been carefully planned by an enemy of the human race in its more exuberant aspects. Insects can do better than this; their habitations are equally monotonous but far more efficiently constructed' (Priestley, 1934, p.301).

The modern period proved to be no kinder. By the conclusion of the 1980s, all Gateshead could boast in terms of architectural 'sights' were an athletics track, a town hall which was compared to a 'faintly embarrassing Scandinavian coffeepot' and the much-criticised Metro Centre (Sudjic, 2002, p.11; as well as Herbert, 2002, p.15; and Hutchinson, 2002, p.15). Indeed, until recently, Gateshead's most endearing architectural landmark was the large, brutalist carpark made famous in the 1971 film *Get Carter* (Hetherington, 2002, p.5; Miller, 2002, p.16; and Nordgren, Rendell, Williams, & Martin, 2002, p.53). As a result, the modern traveller from the south usually bypassed the city altogether, either by way of the freeway, or a rail route that did not provide a station until Newcastle was reached (S. Taylor & Lovie, 2004, p.3).

At the beginning of the 1990s, however, Gateshead's luck finally began to change. In 1993, the conservative government of John Major passed the National Lottery Act, which opened up a potential funding stream for a series of major capital projects, including refurbishments. In an effort to shore up a narrow parliamentary majority, the Tory Party ensured that this money also spread to traditional Labour areas, enabling previously-down-trodden parts of the country to consider strategies for revitalising their economies (Vallely, 2002, p.8).

The Gateshead Municipal Borough Council (GMBC) acted upon this move almost immediately. At the beginning of 1993, it began laying the groundwork for a two-tier architectural competition to convert the disused Baltic Mill into a 'centre for contemporary visual art'; commissioning an extensive structural analysis of the site and drafting a functional brief, which was published in August of that year (RIBA, 1993). From the outset, this functional brief sought to connect the revitalisation of the Baltic Mill with the wider urban regeneration of the region; going to great lengths to discuss the abject state of the district surrounding the Mill in language that could have been penned by a modern-day Priestley:

[Located] 700 metres north east of Gateshead Town centre, from which it is rather isolated because of railways and major roads. [Near-by premises include] the Bridon Ropes factory [which] is only partially used and is shortly to close...Jennings Scrap Yard which occupies the elevated site of the original Gateshead Station; and the Council's gypsy caravan site...the Northern Butchers Hide and Skin depot, a wholesale butchers and a coal merchant, all of which occupy a collection of run down premises. (RIBA, 1993, p.9)

Straight after this, the brief notes that 'the proposed use of the Baltic Flour Mills as an Art Gallery has ramifications which go beyond the immediate site itself. If successful it will have



a catalytic effect on the redevelopment and improvement of the wider Central Riverside Area' (RIBA, 1993, p.12).

This emphasis on the impact of Baltic beyond its immediate site was further reinforced two years later, when the GMBC published its fifteen-year, city-wide £250m Regeneration Strategy for East Gateshead.² Aiming to generate 1,840 new homes and 1,500 new jobs in the city's most economically disadvantaged areas, the regeneration strategy explicitly emphasised how 'arts and cultural development' could be utilised as a catalyst for attracting what it termed 'new firm formation' in the region; that is, entrepreneurs and others willing to set up business in the city (EDAW CR Planning, 1995, pp.3-4). According to the authors of this report, what the city needed was a cultural 'spur'; something that would energise the town's residents and visitors and, by extension, increase the desire of young entrepreneurs to invest in the area (L&R Leisure, 1994, p.22). In response to Priestley's comments that all Gateshead was good for was to 'work and sleep in', there suddenly appeared calls for the creation of a 'third place', one that was neither work nor home, where people can engage in a stimulating intellectual environment and where the edges between learning and leisure, education and entertainment, are blurred, where people are excited and have fun'.³



Figure 2. Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North*, 1998.

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Concurrent with these reports, the city initiated a series of public sculpture projects: beginning with the 1986 Art in Public Places Programme; the 1990 Garden Festival at Gateshead and culminating in the 1998 construction of Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* on a hill overlooking the A1 motorway (Figure 2). Gormley's colossal Cor-ten steel structure—one of the most instantly recognisable artworks in Britain (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.49)—was widely viewed as Gateshead's first step down the path of cultural regeneration (Hickling, 2002, p.12). Costing almost £800,000, the project was not without its critics. Many feared that the wingspan would interfere with television reception, while others griped that the money would have been better spent on schools or hospitals (Valley, 2002, p.8). However, within a couple of months of completion, even the harshest of these critics were proclaiming the statue's success; something which was further confirmed in May of 1998 when the statue was draped in a Newcastle United shirt shortly before the FA Cup final (Frayling, 2005, p.7). GMBC's gamble had apparently paid off.⁴ Eager to maintain the momentum established by the success of *Angel*, Gateshead was soon graced by three larger and far more ambitious sculptural/architectural monuments, all of which opened within just over two years—and two hundred metres—of one another: Wilkinson Eyre's award-winning Millennium Bridge (2001);

Sir Norman Foster's Sage Music Centre (2004); and finally, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (2002) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Gatehead's new architectural monuments. From left to right: The Millennium Bridge; Sage Music Centre; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. Photographs by the author.

Buildings with Bells and Whistles

In many ways, Baltic's story is no more remarkable than a range of locales which, during the 1980s and 90s, sought to use modern or contemporary art as a means of both revitalising hitherto-neglected urban and industrial areas, and shifting their economies from an industrial to a post-industrial model. From Liverpool, to North Adams in the United States and Bilbao in Spain, the story is rather similar: a former industrial centre falling into disrepair due to the exodus of major industry and shipping; only to be rescued from completely sinking into the abyss by a wide-ranging, culture-led urban regeneration project championed by a 'branded' art institution.

What significantly differentiates these more recent projects from earlier forms of arts-led urban gentrification is the manner in which they were initiated by governmental departments, rather than by artists or property developers. Although both artists and developers certainly had a role to play within the subsequent urban transformation, their entry into the projects only occurred after the government had invested time and money in creating the suitable conditions for their emergence. This accords with what Stuart Cameron and Jon Coaffee see as the 'third wave' of art-led urban gentrification. According to the authors, whereas the first wave

involved the creation by artists of a milieu for the *production* of art, [and the second wave] the commodification and *private consumption* of this artistic milieu, [the third wave focused] on the *public consumption* of art, through public art and artistic events, and particularly through the creation of landmark physical infrastructure for the arts, such as galleries, museums and concert halls. (Cameron and Coaffee 2005, p.46 italics theirs. See also Hackworth and Smith 2001, pp.464-77; and Smith 2002, pp.427-50)

The authors see the shift to this third wave relationship as commencing at the beginning of the 1990s; thus aligning it both with the GMBC's investment in arts and cultural infrastructure and the broader implementation of neo-liberal policies which encouraged governments and councils to attract private sector investment, rather than providing a welfarist response to urban and social decline. This is precisely what the GMBC Regeneration Policy documents imply when they talk about contemporary art and culture as the key 'spur' within the city's quest to attract 'new firm formation' (L&R Leisure, 1994, p.22; and EDAW CR Planning, 1995, pp.3-4).

As the desire to attract private firms directly contributed to the creation of 'third places', such as Baltic, an understanding of the sorts of individuals and groups targeted by cities such as Gateshead is essential at this point, as it will not only help to reveal the operational logic that lies at the very heart of the art centre, but also demonstrate why Baltic surpasses almost all other comparable institutions in replicating the city's post-industrial aspirations within its built form.

Driving all of the initiatives listed above was the manner in which 'culture' and 'creativ-



ity' have been re-conceptualised as new forms of industry within what Allen J. Scott calls the 'postfordist cultural economy in advanced capitalist societies' (Scott, 1997, p.326. See also Crane, 1992; and Lash & Urry, 1994). As a critical component within these economies, the 'creative industries'—encompassing everything from art and design, to advertising and marketing, to media and information services—represented one of the fastest-growing economic sectors within major population centres during the 1990s.⁵ Cities that were able to successfully transform their inner-urban spaces into 'cultural zones' thus became attractive to two groups that urban planners and civic boosters saw as supporting the development of new firm formation within the region: cultural tourists and members of the 'creative class'.

As the research of Miles and Miles has shown, 'cultural tourists' were increasingly targeted by European and American cities during this period of urban and cultural redevelopment. Contrasting these sort of travellers with more generic 'package tourists'—who tend to spend very little money in the places they visit—the authors note that 'business tourists and those seeking cultural experiences on short city breaks are likely to be both more affluent and more adventurous in consumption' (Miles & Miles, 2004, p.80). Using Barcelona as an example, they go on to demonstrate how cultural tourists exert a great deal of influence upon the shape and focus of many inner-city redevelopments; the financial attraction of such groups influencing government decision-making regarding architecture, art and public amenities within the city.

One thing that is particularly attractive to cultural tourists is contemporary art; something that Charlotte Klonk attributes to the legacy of 'blockbuster' exhibitions and large-scale biennials and triennials. Tracing this back to the creation of the *Documenta* exhibitions in West Germany during the 1950s, Klonk notes that the widespread success of biennials and triennials throughout the 1990s and 2000s 'has been principally responsible for the spectacular growth in attendance figures at all major art museums in Europe and North America' (Klonk, 2009, p.194).

The second group targeted by cities such as Gateshead are the so-called 'creative class'. Loosely defined as those who work within the entrepreneurial 'cultural' or 'knowledge economies' that came to define many post-industrial cities during the 1980s and 90s, this group has assumed a variety of different titles: from 'gentrifiers' (Zukin, 1998, p.831); to 'cultural intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.310; and Wynne & O'Connor, 1998, p.844); through to the 'new, international, high-income bohemia' (Wilson, 2000, pp.210-9). Nonetheless, the term 'creative class' is nowadays increasingly favoured within the discourses surrounding culture-led urban regeneration, thanks in no small part to the success of Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life* (Florida, 2002).

The job of cities attempting to attract these entrepreneurial, upwardly-mobile individuals is to propagate the idea that they are 'where it's at' in terms of urban and cultural amenities (Wynne & O'Connor, 1998, p.855). As Florida observes: 'by supporting lifestyle and cultural institutions like a cutting-edge music scene or a vibrant artistic community [the city] helps attract and stimulate those who create business and technology' (Florida, 2002, p.55). Note the way that he uses the terms 'culture' and 'lifestyle' interchangeably; once again positioning the creative class within a neo-liberal ideology in which cultural and other forms of economic production are seen as equivalent; each amounting to an individualised (and commodified) 'lifestyle' option. Following this logic, the geographer David Ley has noted how cities during this period similarly sought to reconceive of their arts and cultural amenities in economic terms; resulting in what he describes as a 'movement from festivals to festival markets, from cultural production to cultural economies, to an intensified economic colonisation of the cultural realm, to the representation of the creative city not as a means of redemption but as a means of economic accumulation' (Ley, 2003, p.2342). Occurring right in the middle of this shift, both the decision to transform the Baltic Mill into a centre for contemporary art, as well as one's subsequent experience of the building itself, can be understood as directly informed by this ideology.

Indeed, even GMBC's decision to transform the Mill into a non-collecting contemporary art centre—rather than a museum of modern and/or contemporary art—can be best explained through a similar logic. The key idea here is the creation of what Florida terms



'authentic places'; hybrid, experiential environments which combine 'indigenous street-level culture', with a mix of established, 'lifestyle' options (Florida, 2002). Within this paradigm, contemporary art and culture are seen to play a key role. In contrast to more traditional cultural spaces—which generally comprise an art museum plus 'the high art triumvirate of a symphony orchestra, an opera company and a ballet company'—the inclusion of contemporary cultural activities is seen to offer more of the necessary 'vibrancy' and 'excitement' required by 'creative' individuals (Florida, 2002, p.182). Again, to quote Florida:

One problem [with the traditional space] is static repertoire. In a museum, for instance, the permanent collection is, well, permanent: It just hangs there. A typical solution is more packaged travelling exhibits, preferably interactive multimedia exhibits, with lots of bells and whistles. (Florida, 2002, p.182)

According to Florida then, the sorts of 'authentic places' that are attractive to members of the creative class are those that contain a variety of 'bells and whistles' environments; where art serves as merely one choice within a varied range of lifestyle options on offer. Describing it as 'native and of-the-moment'—and contrasting it to 'art imported from another century for audiences imported from the suburbs'—he attempts to define the contemporary city centre as one of action, life and spectacle: precisely the type of environment sought by institutions such as Baltic (Florida, 2002, p.182).

Of course, contained within this analysis is one of the key criticisms that can be levelled at the entire re-imagining project as exemplified by Baltic in Gateshead: namely, the question of what is to be done with those spaces and places outside of the ones deemed 'authentic' by theorists such as Florida and members of the creative class. This desire to transform the city centre into a place of spectacular 'lifestyle options' is evidently geared towards a particular type of 'aspirational' entrepreneur: someone who, as inferred above, is 'attracted' to the region from other cities that do not possess such 'cutting-edge' or 'vibrant' cultural facilities. In other words, although predominantly centred around inner-city projects, the key focus of these endeavours has been ultimately directed outwards; past the suburbs and towards other, competing, cities within the region.

Within the context of the United Kingdom, this outward focus was most evidently exemplified by Gateshead and Newcastle's desire to be named the 2008 'European Capital of Culture'; placing them in direct competition with cities such as Liverpool, Cardiff and Bristol.⁶ The European Capital of Culture programme—originally dubbed the 'European Cities of Culture'—was initiated in 1985 by the then-European Community in order to 'stimulate the non-economic dimension of the European Union and promote its greater cohesiveness, [yet, at the same time] provide individual cities and nations with an opportunity to proclaim their cultural leadership' (Gold & Gold, 2005, p.7). In bestowing upon a particular city (or small group of cities) the title of 'Capital of Culture', the European Community hoped to reactivate a common cultural and historical memory by emphasising shared values and heritage.⁷ Concurrent with this desire was a recognised need to celebrate and promote cultural diversity between various host countries; a notion which grew out of fears that economic integration—particularly the advent of a single European market—might generate a form of cultural homogenisation.

Within its relatively short history, Glasgow's staging of the 1990 Capital of Culture festival is commonly regarded as significant in elevating its magnitude and importance within the European festival calendar; particularly in regards to medium-sized, European cities such as those competing for the right to host the 2008 event.⁸ John and Margaret Gold, for example, note that the staging of the festival 'allowed the municipal authorities to confront the city's established image, put Glasgow on the European map and build venues that would enrich local cultural life when the festival was over' (Gold & Gold, 2005, p.225). In other words, the festival acted as the aforementioned cultural 'spur' for the city of Glasgow; justifying both its previous investment in cultural amenities (which were requisite for it to compete for the title in the first place) and the continued development of new venues to



further anchor its place on the 'European map' of cities competing for the attention of 'creative' workers.

For all of its supposed benefits however, this focus on perpetually competing with other cities for the attention (and custom) of the creative class can have an adverse effect on a city's less glamorous projects or regions—those that Florida patronisingly dubs as catering to 'audiences imported from the suburbs'. Within this vision, 'permanent' or 'static' sites—that is, those that cannot be transformed into spaces of 'cultural capital'—are excluded from the discourse surrounding culture-based urban regeneration; sometimes with dramatic consequences. Thus Anna Minton observes that Newcastle and Gateshead's failed bid to host the 2008 Capital of Culture festival (it was eventually awarded to Liverpool) was the result of Newcastle City Council getting 'badly caught out when the inclusive language and aims of its cultural strategy jarred with the starkly non-participatory approach of its *Going for Growth* strategy, which announced the demolition of 6,000 homes in a local newspaper, before informing—let alone asking—the people who lived there' (Minton, 2003, p.7). This event is exemplary of the wider problems surrounding such a neo-liberal approach to cultural planning: those that are unable (or unwilling) to participate in the aspirational drive to make the city more attractive to both cultural tourists and other 'creatives'—key agents within the 'growth' of post-industrial cities—are considered by the city to be both physically and discursively ulterior to its vision of itself as a progressive, vibrant and 'creative' locale. A vision that, it will be argued, is also intrinsic to the design and function of Baltic.

Maintaining a Façade

Despite the obvious criticisms that can be levelled at Florida's rather simplistic and generalised readings into this emergent entrepreneurial 'class', the effect that these sorts of individuals had on cities' redevelopment strategies during the 1990s and 2000s is nevertheless significant.⁹ As cultural planning experts such as Franco Bianchini and Hermann Schwengel observed, governments had begun to reposition their cities within these hyper-representational, theatrical environments over a decade before Florida's text; leading to what they have termed a cultural 're-imagining' of its more nefarious precincts (Bianchini & Schwengel, 1991, pp.212-35).¹⁰ This idea of 're-imagining' spaces and places within the city is important, as it helps to explain GMBC's decision to maintain the architectural façade of the Baltic Mill, rather than electing to erect a more 'spectacular' museum or art centre; such as those that were being concurrently erected in places such as Bilbao, Cincinnati or Graz.¹¹ In contrast to a conspicuous architectural monument, cities such as Gateshead chose instead to draw upon the edgy aesthetic of their locality by re-purposing the existing industrial fabric; thereby transforming it into a post-industrial producer of spectacle.¹² This certainly accords with Florida's notion of the 'indigenous street-level culture [of] authentic places'; allowing the city to anchor its re-imagining project within a specific place and time—something that occurs not only in terms of the façade, but is also fundamental to the experience of the building itself (Florida, 2002, p.19).

This desire to maintain the authenticity of the shell and location is also evident throughout the functional brief; which, in place of any form of conceptual framework, instead posits a list of 'relevant international comparators, which should inform [the] architectural proposals' (RIBA, 1993, p.7). These precedents comprised:

The Museum [sic] of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Tokyo and Los Angeles (perhaps especially the Temporary Contemporary galleries in the latter), through to the Hallen Für Neue Kunst Schaffhausen Collection in Switzerland, or the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh [in addition to] a recently converted Flour Mill to the contemporary gallery in Oporto [sic: Oporto] and the Bankside Power Station in Southall [sic: Southwark] being considered for the Tate's Museum of Modern Art. (RIBA, 1993, p.7)

Two key objectives can be ascertained from the above list. The first is implicit in the fact that all of these comparative institutions are *museums* of contemporary art,¹³ rather than



non-collecting institutions. The exclusion of comparable non-collecting institutions—such as Berlin's Kunst-Werke-Institut, or the Kunsthalle Zürich—in favour of more established factory conversions is important, as demonstrates Baltic's aspiration to become a prominent institution within its region, rather than a more exclusive *Kunsthalle* space, whose exhibition program could be viewed as being tailored to a crowd with an already-established knowledge of contemporary art.¹⁴

Secondly, although the brief does mention the Tate's proposed conversion of the Bank-side Power station, it conspicuously fails to mention two other concurrent cultural projects whose history and design share many more comparable features to the Gateshead proposal: the Tate Liverpool and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.



Figure 4. The Tate Liverpool. Image: Wikimedia Commons, retrieved 7 July 2014 from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tate_Liverpool_2.jpg.

At the level of both design and organisation, James Stirling and Michael Wilford's two-stage conversion of a series of warehouses surrounding Albert Dock into the Tate Liverpool in 1988 (Figure 4) exhibits many parallels to Baltic: both involved the conversion of a hitherto-neglected industrial landmark into a large cultural institution; both commanded a prominent position within their respective waterfronts; and both were part of a larger urban re-imagination project that combined various cultural and commercial projects with a 'loft living' aesthetic, incorporating hotels and apartments (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.42; Cumming, 2002, p.11; and Zukin, 1988). Much like Gateshead, the Tate Liverpool was also conceived around a re-imagining of the Albert Dock site and its iconic industrial façades; to 'only make alterations where necessary...to achieve the environmental standards for exhibiting art' (James Stirling in Searing, 2004, p.75).

Similarly, when considering the *type* of arts institution that Baltic wished to become—its 'aspiration'—the 1999 conversion of North Adams' disused complex of factories into the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) reveals a raft of correlations with the Gateshead project (Figure 5).¹⁵ Much like Baltic, MASS MoCA set out to emulate a modern or contemporary art museum—as is evident in it retaining the word 'museum' in its title—before becoming a multi-use arts centre in 1993; precisely when GMBC began to draft the functional brief for the conversion of the Baltic Mill (Dunning, 1995, p.13; Grimes, 1993, p.3). Therefore, there is little doubt that Gateshead would have been keenly aware of the MASS MoCA conversion—particularly due to the amount of publicity that the project was generating for the town of North Adams. In early 2000 for example—just a few months after its opening celebrations—the *New York Times* reported that over 92,000 people had already



visited the Centre, well in excess of the organisation's own first-year estimates (Kifner, 2000, p.14; Vogel, 2000a, p.44, Vogel, 2000b, p.30). Particularly evident were the commercial benefits that the city appeared to be reaping as a result of the project. The *New York Times*' Carol Vogel was especially enthusiastic about this, noting that MASS MoCA

has added 15,000 more square feet of office space over the last year. Because its tenants, primarily fast-growing technology companies, are attracting like-minded businesses to the Berkshires, it is renovating an additional 34,000 square feet, all of which has already been leased. Rents have more than doubled. (Vogel, 2000b, p.30)

Coming just eighteen months before Baltic's long-awaited opening celebrations, these results could hardly have gone unnoticed by those working on Gateshead's similarly aspirational venture.



Figure 5: The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).

Photograph by Emma Franco, courtesy of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

Alleviating Internal Tensions

Although they share many external similarities, Baltic's 'aspirational' paradigm is probably most evident when examining the manner in which one engages with its internal gallery spaces. In this regard, there is certainly a marked contrast between the internal galleries at both Baltic and the Tate Liverpool, and the (albeit aestheticised) industrial spaces at MASS MoCA; the latter of which exemplify what Nikos Papastergiadis has called 'parafunctional spaces'. According to Papastergiadis, parafunctional sites are those

buildings and zones that were designed for one function but have been reclaimed by different people and adapted for alternative uses. Factories and warehouses, once designed as the driving forces and depots of modern production, have now become a different kind of waiting space. Sometimes all these places wait for is the slow return to weeds. But, before nature reclaims the city, there is a space for counter-cultural production. (Papastergiadis, 2005, p.83)

Note the emphasis here on 'counter-cultural production' that occurs just prior to the 'return of weeds'—this is the sort of tension evident in spaces like those at MASS MoCA; whose 'cracks, rips and worn out zones are attractive to artists because they are the visual and architectural embodiment of the tearing and fading of the line that separates rhetoric



from reality' (Papastergiadis, 2005, p.85). Within these environments, the *irregularity* of the space—its evidence of decline and degradation—acts as a visual counter-balance to the universalism that governs the discourse of the art museum and, by extension, the works contained therein.



Figure 6. Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing 692: Continuous Forms with Color in Washes Superimposed* (1991) on display at MASS MoCA's Building 7 Gallery. Photograph by Emma Franco, courtesy of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.



Figure 7. Richard Artschwager *Tower II* (1979), on exhibition at Tate Liverpool in 2012 (Image: Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 7 July 2014 from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower_II_by_Richard_Artschwager,_Tate_Liverpool.jpg); Kerry James Marshall, *Along the Way* exhibition at Baltic in 2006 (Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art).

In contrast to the irregular, deliberately worn down spaces of MASS MoCA (Figure 6), the gallery environments at both Baltic and the Tate Liverpool instead comprised a series of isolated, multi-cube display environments which are almost completely isolated from the original industrial envelope. In the above examples (Figure 7), one notes that only the brick roof of the original Albert Dock building is visible from within the Tate Liverpool's gallery spaces; while Baltic's third floor art space goes even further and completely removes any trace of the site's former use. Mimicking the display environment of other large-scale, industrial conversions the world over (such as the list of 'relevant international comparators' mentioned earlier), this multi-cube arrangement consists of a series of cube-like display



spaces, each of which varies significantly in terms of height and depth, as well as the level of transparency in regards to the admission or exclusion of external views. Stacked one on top of another throughout the complex, these cubes provide the artist or curator with a wide range of display conditions and viewing scenarios; facilitating works that require white cubes, black boxes, as well as a multitude of other display conditions. Via this arrangement, the gallery spaces at Baltic are able to cater to shows that incorporate videos or projection in darkened spaces (Figure 8), stand-alone objects that require hermetic, white cube environments, as well as installations that seek to engage directly with the wider region and thus require some form of transparency between the internal and external spaces (Figure 9).

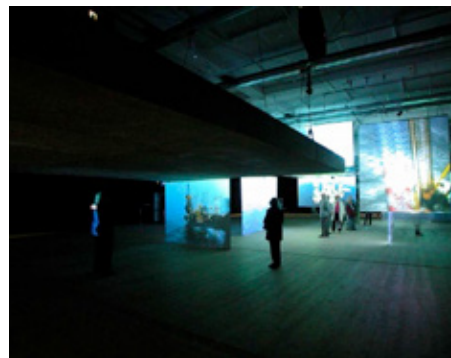


Figure 8. Jane & Louise Wilson, *A Free and Anonymous Monument* (2003), on display at Baltic's third floor art space in 2003. Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.



Figure 9. Chris Burden, *Tyne Bridge* (2002), on display at Baltic's fourth floor art space in 2002. Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.

By deliberately mirroring the display environment of larger *museums* of contemporary art, Baltic thus demonstrates its aspiration to be regarded as a key contemporary cultural institution, rather than a site for 'counter-cultural production'. Therefore, much like a contemporary art museum—and much like the two Tate Galleries in London and Liverpool—the 'cracks, rips and worn out zones' that are emblazoned on the façade give way to 'large glass entrances, sandblasted walls, polished floors' (Papastergiadis, 2005, p.84) as soon as one crosses the threshold into the art spaces themselves.

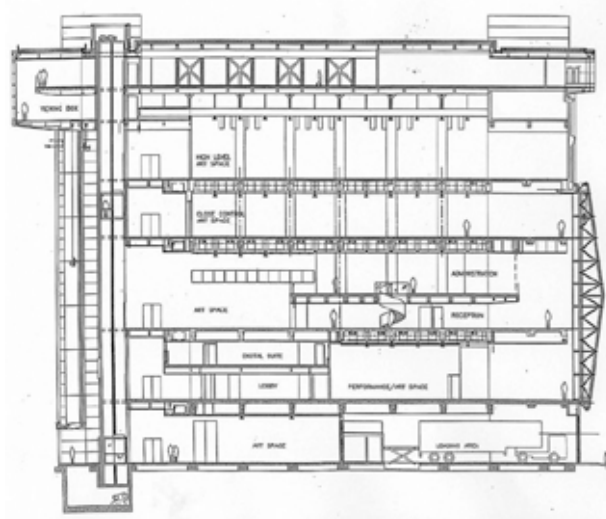


Figure 10. Baltic: Section. Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.



Although both Baltic and the two Tates employ a similar multi-cube environment—each attempting to offset the usual monotony of the enfilade gallery sequence by employing irregular-sized and -scaled configurations—the manner in which Baltic shifts the orientation of its spaces from a horizontal to a vertical axis aligns its ‘aspirations’ with the surrounding region in a far more explicit manner than any of these other spaces (Figure 10). Here, one begins to get a sense of the centrifugal forces at work within the design and function of Baltic. For example, in forgoing the horizontal ‘interior street’ (Searing, 2004, p.121) design that is evident in the design of both the Tate Modern and Liverpool buildings, in favour of an almost vertiginous verticality, Baltic explicitly aligns its gallery configuration with the wider gentrification of the Gateshead’s Quays development (Figure 11)—whose new high-rise, ‘yuppier’ apartments are known as ‘Baltic Quays’ (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.50).



Figure 11. Baltic Quays (on the far left) next to Baltic, the Sage and the Millennium Bridge. Copyright Stephen Sweeney and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.

Indeed, this emphasis upon vertical movements throughout the building was an important design feature for the architect of the redevelopment, Dominic Williams, who remarked that:

I think that in some sense the vertical feel has been retained, certainly in terms of how you move through the building. You can either go up in the lifts or you can go up a staircase through one of the main vertical cores of the building... I thought that it was important that some of the experience [of the verticality of the façade] was retained in the new building. (Nordgren et al., 2002)

Clearly demarcating the passage through and between the gallery spaces—whereby the visitor moves horizontally *through* a particular space, but vertically *between* them—helps to both orientate and break-up the experience; recalling the segregation of movement that similarly occurs within the neighbouring high-rise apartments. This correlation is further heightened by the profusion of glass, anodised aluminium and steel employed within the construction of the centre (Figure 12).

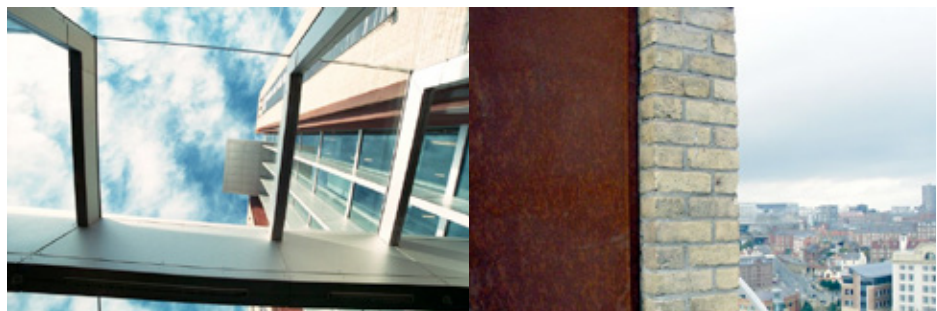


Figure 12. Baltic as seen from the interior lobby; note the profusion of glass, anodised aluminium and Cor-ten steel (right) employed within the conversion. Both images courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.

The architect's decision to use Cor-ten steel to re-form missing parts of the original structure and to construct a corridor framing the centre's main entranceway further links Baltic to the wider regeneration of the city. The use of Cor-ten helps to create a bridge between the building's (industrial) past and its new use by literally filling in the gaps between the bricks and aluminium of both façades, as symbolic connections between the city's past, and its future: Cor-ten being the material employed in many shipping dock constructions (its past); as well as in the construction of Gormley's *Angel of the North* (its future).¹⁶

In addition to referencing nearby structures, the transparent glass walls that run straight up the eastern and western sides of the building strengthen the centrifugal aspiration of the centre by perpetually reinforcing its 'catalytic effect on the redevelopment and improvement of the wider Central Riverside Area' (RIBA, 1993, p.12). Within the overall scheme, these exterior windows serve two important functions: they imbue the interior exhibitions and the institution itself with a sense of *authentic* place; while also creating a visual link between these spaces and those inhabited by the upwardly-mobile 'creatives' nearby. The vistas evident from these spaces thus transform the formerly unglamorous industrial landscape of Gateshead and Newcastle into a kind of contemporary urban sculptural spectacle that is offered up for the ocular consumption of the cultural tourists (Figure 13); a feature that is even available in the level 6 ladies' toilets (Figure 14).¹⁷



Figure 13. View from Baltic's viewing box.
Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.



Figure 14. View from the ladies' toilets on level 6.
Image courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.

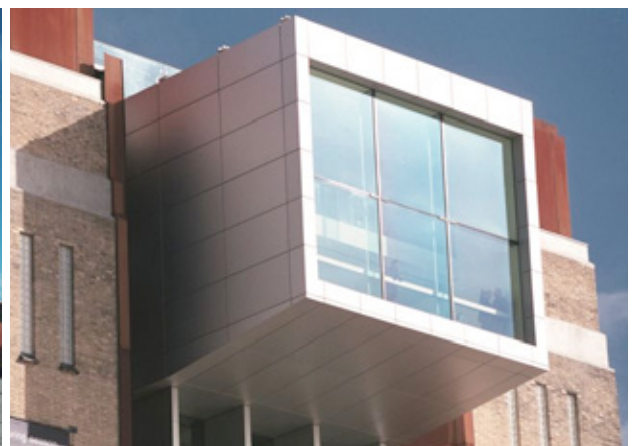


Figure 15. Baltic's viewing box. Both photographs by the author.



The centrifugal process of contemplation afforded by the transparent walls is perfectly exemplified—and somewhat heightened—by the viewing box platform located at the very top of the building (Figure 15). The obvious obtrusiveness of this cantilevered platform in relation to the relative geometrical symmetry of the rest of the façade (it is easily noticeable from as far away as the Newcastle-side of the Millennium Bridge) automatically draws attention to both itself and the large wall of glass that runs up to and engulfs it. In particular, the movement of the building's inhabitants as they move up-and-down in the lifts and in-and-out of sight within the building is especially noticeable to the viewer approaching the building. This sensation afforded to the street-level viewer is significantly enhanced by the constrictive nature of the lifts and the limited depth-of-field of the viewing box, both of which work to push inhabitants right up against the panes of glass; effectively framing them. The limited horizontal depth afforded by this approach means that, for a majority of the time in which they are visible, the swarming bodies within the centre all appear to be heading either up or down; towards the viewing box or away from it. As visitors walking towards the centre already find themselves on the 'ground floor' relative to this movement, such sightings appear to point in only one direction: up.

This presumed upward-trajectory is reinforced in various literature/reviews concerning the centre—where a discussion of the internal spaces generally commences from the top floor¹⁸—and is dominated by the viewing box; the one part of the complex where visitors appear content to stand still. Like many of the building's other external features, this vertical ascendancy once again relates the project to the city's aspirations; a trajectory that is similarly reinforced by the distribution of galleries and other spaces throughout the complex (Figure 10). Beginning with an artist's studio/function space on the ground floor (akin to the sorts of spaces and events that one would expect to find at an artist-run initiative); the viewer then ascends the spine of the building, passing on the way a performance/multi-media space (level one); a confined gallery space (level two); the slightly larger, 'close control' gallery (level three); before finally reaching the centre's large-scale art space on level four. Above the gallery spaces are the viewing box, which occupies the 'penthouse' on levels five and six, along with the more exclusive Rooftop Restaurant at the very top of the building. Thus the ascension through the core of Baltic parallels both the movements and hierarchy of spaces evident in other developments such as the Baltic Quays apartments; inhabitants of both sites are primarily focused on making it to the top floor, 'penthouse' suites, whether actually or aspirationally. At Baltic, this is something that is not just evident in the fact that the centre's most exclusive floors—the large-scale art space and the Rooftop Restaurant—are located on the top floors, but is also reinforced throughout one's experience of the centre: from the moment the visitor first encounters the building, as well as via the exterior views that are afforded as one ascends in the lifts. Note however that, despite the abundance of viewing platforms located throughout the centre, the type of views on offer here are very much alike. Regardless of whether one is gazing out at the Tyne River (and the Millennium Bridge), over towards Norman Foster's Sage Music Centre, back to Gateshead Quay and its nearby apartments, or across the banks to Newcastle's re-imagined town centre, the entire experience is one that perpetually reinforces the manner in which contemporary art, culture and architecture can transform a place into a site of post-industrial spectacle; replete with all of the 'bells and whistles' that are concomitant with 21st century creative cities. These views, however, are also highly regulated; a product of both the building's location, as well as its design. Neither the city's old attractions (the brutalist car park, the Scandinavian coffeepot of a town hall), nor indeed its everyday inhabitants (the Gateshead town centre lies a mile-and-a-half to the south of Baltic) are evident to those looking out from the ladies' toilets, or having a meal at the Rooftop Restaurant, as these vistas are reserved purely for the purview realm of aspirations and desires, not of everyday reality.



The Rooftop Restaurant is one of several facilities—the others being the Riverside Restaurant, the café and the bookshop—which offer Baltic's non-art experiences. As Alan J. Smith (Baltic's first Chairman) writes:

Baltic is not just about art. Baltic [is] a place where people can come simply to hang out in the café, in the Riverside Restaurant or in the Rooftop Restaurant, to browse through the bookshop, or to simply sit in the Baltic Square enjoying one of the most amazing views in the world. (Nordgren et al., 2002, p.5)

Note here how the design and operation of these facilities are not treated as separate or ancillary to the art spaces, but are instead promoted as being as much a part of the 'Baltic experience'¹⁹ as taking in an exhibition. The Baltic experience is thus equated with a lifestyle activity, rather than with an art museum visit; once again aligning the centre's aspirations with the desires of the 'creative class' discussed earlier. As indicated above, visitors do not even have to view *any* installation in order to partake in the experience; the art exhibitions instead become just one of a host of experiential activities offered by the venue. As Nordgren mused:

[Visitors] may not look at the art until the second visit; they may just want to go for a cup of tea. But it's about getting them inside the building and then making them want to come back...I know that many will come initially for the viewing gallery, to look over the Tyne at the bridges. But I'm certain they'll also be intrigued and take a look at the artworks too. If not then, then the next time they come. (Baltic the Beautiful, 2002, p.24)

This view sounds remarkably similar to the gallery spaces at London's Tate Modern, where visitors are provided with a multitude of cafes, shops and viewing platforms in between gallery spaces. As one of the architects behind the project noted: 'We wanted to design a place where people could come have coffee and look at some art' (Jacques Herzog in Cheng, 2000, p.101). Similarly, the authors of Baltic's 1994 'Business Plan' also pictured the centre as more of a lifestyle experience than an art space, recognising

the difficulty that many people face in making that first step to cross the threshold into an arts venue and [offering an alternative that] is predicated on the belief that [once people are encouraged] into the building, they can ultimately be encouraged and persuaded to begin to explore the possibilities offered by the programme...contributing to the totality of the visitor experience. (L&R Leisure, 1994, p.41)

Each of the dynamic and varied visitor experiences on offer at Baltic is thus enmeshed within the wider lifestyle transformation occurring within the wider Gateshead/Newcastle region; something that extends through to the design and selection of the fittings employed throughout the centre. The furniture, for example, was especially designed by Åko Axelsson in order to imbue the entire centre with a 'loft apartment' aesthetic; once again aligning the building to the nearby Baltic Quays apartments. As *The Observer's* Laura Cumming stated: 'loft-living is very much the style of the Baltic, with its white walls and lime-washed pine floors, its acres of space and plate glass. You could move in. You could live and work here' (Cumming, 2002, p.11). The distribution of this aesthetic in and around Baltic obscures the line between the art object and the commodity; alluding to loft living and providing vistas that speak of a (symbolically) richer post-industrial future for the region. Within these spaces, aestheticised objects are displayed on a distinctly human-scale; either on low-lying plinths and window displays that recall those used by department stores, or scattered throughout the commercial spaces such as the café. Moreover, this idea of of Baltic as a 'total consuming environment',²⁰ is reinforced by the fact that all of this Swedish-designed furniture can be ordered and purchased in the bookshop; enabling one to 'create the Baltic look in your Newcastle loft apartment' (Sieghart, 2002, p.7).





Figure 16. Chairs designed by Åko Axelsson in Baltic's ground floor café.

Image on the left: courtesy of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art; image on the right: photograph by the author.

Conclusion

In light of the above, it is hardly surprising that the majority of studies examining the success of Baltic have chosen to focus almost exclusively on the surrounding region. Indeed, many early reviews of the centre followed a similar pattern: beginning with a discussion of the façade, before quickly shifting to an analysis of the remarkable speed at which the surrounding region appeared to be changing as a result of the centre's presence (Hetherington, 2002, p.5; Homes, 2002, p.25; Moody-Stuart, 2002, p.14). In this manner, *The Guardian's* Peter Hetherington, reported that:

Gateshead Quays, the new south bank...will soon embrace hundreds of new apartments, a big hotel, bars and night clubs...developers are queuing up...To create more jobs, work will soon start on the Baltic business park, a £250m development with avenues and a central square built to replicate city streets. A university campus could move to the site alongside the re-location of a local further education college (Hetherington, 2002, p.5).

Note the contrast between this image of an apparently prosperous region and the moribund description of the area that was outlined in the functional brief a decade before. In the space of a couple of years, Gateshead had suddenly 'been put on the international map'; being referred to as 'the region's most promising engine of growth' (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.49) in studies whose language resembles Carol Vogel's assessments of MASS MoCA above.

As the above makes clear, this tendency of commentators to perpetually view the success of Baltic in terms of its effect on the region is no coincidence; it is built into the very fabric of the building itself. Indeed, if judged primarily on gentrification alone—that is, its ability to attract private investment and 'new wealth'—then there is little doubt that GMBC's decision to convert the Baltic Mill into a centre for contemporary art has been successful. Moreover, as has been argued above, Baltic could very well be considered the most exemplary manifestation of this 'aspirational' paradigm; one that employs a variety of centrifugal devices to perpetually direct the viewer's gaze away from the centre and towards the newly-reimagined landscape surrounding it.



However, if we are able to tear our gaze away from the spectacular vistas for a moment and to probe a little deeper into Baltic's impact beyond Quayside, then the results are a little more ambiguous. Outside of its immediate vicinity, there is still little evidence to suggest that Baltic has had a positive effect on those residents of Gateshead who are unable to buy into a 'loft aesthetic'. Indeed, as Cameron and Coaffee have observed, the majority of people who purchased the properties in and around the Quayside area were 'young singles and professionals, predominantly from outside the area, with some property being bought up by investors and sold on at a higher price' (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.53). Although there was a concurrent push by GMBC to build homes and amenities away from Gateshead Quays that were intended to be affordable for local people, there is as yet no evidence that this has in fact occurred.

Of perhaps greater concern is the fact that Gateshead's apparent desire to maintain its 'authentic places' appears to be limited to the area contained within the cultural or tourist precincts—a tendency that was best encapsulated by the 2010 demolition of the Trinity Square carpark made famous by *Get Carter* (Hatherley, 2010, p.31). This incident raises some serious concerns regarding precisely the sorts of motivations driving this most recent wave of arts-led gentrification. Outside of the ability of artists and cultural workers to somewhat magically transform 'junk' space into 'art' space, what is to become of the spaces and cultures that cannot be transmogrified into 'economic capital' (Ley, 2003, p.2340)? Is there still a place and, more importantly, a *space* for 'gannin' the match, Bigg Market drinking, having a 'laff' within this wider cultural re-imaging project, or are those aspects of a city's culture which cannot immediately be converted into 'cultural capital' destined for the same fate as the dockside culture that used to be the pride of the north-east: shunted away, only to return in a simulacral form for spectacular consumption by those tourists and workers who can afford to pay for the 'experience' (Hollands and Chatterton, 2002, pp.298-300; and Proctor, 2013, pp.19-20)?

Moreover, questions still need to be asked as to whether Baltic is in fact a sustainable—or even desirable—paradigm for contemporary art centres; particularly in this era of post-GFC cuts and austerity. If anything, Baltic does force us to question how these centres of contemporary art can respond and adapt to a radically different social and political environment: when such ostentatious displays of ascendant capital run counter to the very real concerns facing long term residents in cities such as Gateshead.

That being said, one must nonetheless admire the impressive extent to which Baltic has managed to embody the transformative ambition of Gateshead's re-imagination project. Far more than being merely a facsimile of either the Bilbao Guggenheim or Tate Modern, Baltic in fact stands as a paradigmatic example of the manner in which contemporary art can be instrumentalised by the transformation of places and spaces.



Endnotes

¹ The majority of texts discussing this art centre, including those released in-house, refer to it in the shorthand form, without the definite article: that is, as 'Baltic', rather than '*the* Baltic'—something which is replicated in this article.

² Some of the ideas behind this Regeneration Strategy—such as the conversion of the Baltic Mill into a contemporary arts centre—had already been aired several years previously. However, it was only in 1995 that the GMBC were finally able to begin to secure funds for this regeneration; thanks in no small part to the National Lottery.

³ Alan J. Smith (Baltic's first chairman) cited in Nordgren et al. 2002, p.5. This call was, of course, in no way something that was unique to Gateshead; as can be seen in the references to both Documenta (L&R Leisure 1994, p.46; Minton 2003, p.22) and—more obviously—the 'Bilbao Effect' (Binney 2002, p.37; Gayford 2002, p.19; Minton 2003, p.4; Ward 2002, p.7; and Willoughby 2002, p.12) that abound in the commentary both before and after the opening of Baltic.

⁴ It should be noted here that the driving force behind this project (and several of the ones to follow) was GMBC; Newcastle Council was, at times, 'strongly opposed' to such ventures' (Minton 2003, p.17).

⁵ For a discussion of the implementation of policies directed towards the 'cultural industries' in the UK, see the work of Franco Bianchini (especially Bianchini 1987, pp.111-13 and Bianchini 1990, pp.215-50); as well as Flew 2013, pp.9-32; and Zukin 1995, pp.3-11.

⁶ See Griffiths, 2008, pp.415-30 for an analysis of these three cities' campaigns.

⁷ Pantel, 1999, pp.46; 52. See also Gold and Gold, 2005, p.222; and McMahon, 1995, p.134.

⁸ Berry and Shephard, 2001, p.162. See also (Leslie, 2001, pp.111-34) in the same volume. Glasgow's success in this regard can be seen in the fact that, after 1990, a majority of applicants for the title of Capital of Culture, were medium-sized cities: with subsequent events staged in places as diverse as Antwerp, Thessaloniki, Rotterdam, Porto and Salamanca. For an account of the festivals in Rotterdam/Porto and Salamanca, see Hitters, 2006, pp.281-302 and (Herrero et al., 2006, pp.310-28).

⁹ The sociologist Jamie Peck, for instance, has noted that, although Florida's 'less-than-analytical musings [frequently] descend into self-indulgent forms of amateur microsociology and crass celebrations of hipster embourgeoisement...a strikingly large number of cities have willingly entrained themselves to Florida's creative vision' (Peck 2005, pp. 742 & 744-45). Similarly, the conservative critic Steven Malanga—while attacking many of the findings within Florida's book—concedes that: '[The] notion that cities must become trendy, happening places in order to compete in the twenty-first century economy is sweeping urban America...A generation of leftish policy-makers and urban planners are rushing to implement Florida's vision [at the same time as] an admiring host of uncritical journalists touts it' (Malanga 2004, p.36).

¹⁰ This notion of 're-imagining' is directly influenced by the work of Kevin Lynch who advocates cities increasing their 'imageability'. See (Lynch 1960, p.439).

¹¹ For an analysis of the architecture of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, see (T. Smith, 2009); for the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati, see Foster, 2013; for the Kunsthaus Graz, see Bogner, 2004 and Lentini, 2012.

¹² Wynne and O'Connor examine this transformation in relation to Manchester, demonstrating the 're-imagining of the identity of the city as a northern, industrial, working-class city whose claim to world status in production has disappeared. Cultural regeneration then is explicitly linked, by respondents and users of the centre, to a re-imagining of place' (Wynne and O'Connor 1998, p.856).

¹³ As evidenced by the citation of many of these institutions in the closing chapter of Lorente 1998 (pp.238-63). Moreover, although it does mention the Temporary Contemporary in Los Angeles, it only does so in reference to its relationship to the much more prominent L.A. Museum of Contemporary Art.



Endnotes

¹⁴ Characteristic of this trend is the increasing tendency for contemporary art institutions within the English-speaking world to call themselves a 'Kunsthalle'—such as Melbourne's Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (<https://www.accaonline.org.au/about-acca> accessed 7 July 2014). The adoption of this trendy German moniker within a discussion of the centre's program obviously implies that the visitor already possesses enough of an understanding of the institutional landscape of contemporary art to differentiate a *Kunsthalle* from a museum of contemporary art, or an artist-run-initiative; a distinction which a visitor to a large-scale museum such as the Tate Modern would not be expected to know.

¹⁵ For a general overall history of the project, see the collection of essays in Traynor, 2000. Sharon Zukin also provides a good insight into the project's background—especially Thomas Krens' and the Guggenheim's fluctuating involvement in the project (Zukin 1995, pp.79-107).

¹⁶ A link that was readily acknowledged by the architect, see Nordgren et al., 2002.

¹⁷ *The Times* Literary Supplement's Elaine Williams, for example, encourages visitors to 'take their pick of view[s]' so as to 'gaze at the theatrical panorama of Newcastle' (Williams 2002, p.19).

¹⁸ See, for example, (Ballantyne 2002, p.21; Knapton 2002, p.1; Newton 2002, p.13; or J. Taylor 2002, p.31). In addition to that, the official 'Walk-Through' guide to Baltic (Nordgren et al. 2002) also begins by taking an escalator to the top, before working its way downwards.

¹⁹ This is a term often employed by the centre's first director when discussing the building. See, for example, Nordgren et al. 2002, p.92.

²⁰ As University College of London's Jane Rendell observes in the official Baltic guide: '...people [nowadays] seem interested in a "total consuming environment": food, written matter, art, design and architecture all together... magazines like *Wallpaper**, but also in recent changes to art magazines like *Make* and *Contemporary Visual Arts*'. See Nordgren et al. 2002, p.92.



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