

DPA: creative and cultural research, strategy and implementation.

Newsletter

September 2008

Welcome to the first in a series of newsletters from the team at David Powell Associates (DPA)

We highlight work we have delivered recently to illustrate something of the range of our contributions in supporting the growth of cultural activity - from the concrete to the theoretical.

DPA is a consultancy that helps make innovative projects happen. We work with public, private and community sectors to promote the role of cultural activity and creative enterprise in regeneration and community development. We provide support and experience at any stage from concept to completion, through research, advice and evaluation and through supporting practical programmes.

We lead with a report by Peter Mount on the opening, later this month, of QUAD in Derby city centre, the latest in a flowering of new and exciting venues across the East Midlands.

Also featured is comment from David Powell, from our role as Creative Industries and Culture Adviser to Thames Gateway London Partnership, on the prospects for culture in the regeneration of Thames Gateway. Prakash Daswani, Director of Cultural Co-operation, reports on a stimulating think piece, *Interculturalism and Creativity in the 21st Century City*, that was commissioned by the British Council, and which he wrote with us. And we share our excitement about the new Cultural Footprints with universities in two cities in South East England.

In our next edition, we will be reporting on research we have completed for the National Federation of Artist Studio Providers on the impact of London's Olympic project on artists' studios in East London, and on the work we are doing with the University of Sussex helping devise an innovative future role for the Gardner Arts Centre.

As this is our first foray into newsletters, **we'd appreciate your comments on its value to you and encourage you to receive future editions.** Please also forward it to others who would be interested. If you'd like to find out more about our work you can contact us directly on 020 7713 8100, email info@dpa-ltd.co.uk or visit our website at www.dpa-ltd.co.uk



Open for business

by Peter Mount

QUAD, Derby's new visual arts and media centre, opens on 26th September. In addition to housing cinemas, galleries and studios, QUAD will act as a focal point for the region's artists and creative groups offer an invitation to enjoy an exciting programme of film and world class events and exhibitions, and provide an emblem of the city centre's regeneration. www.derbyquad.co.uk

DPA has been working in Derby with the City Council since 1998, and as the City's Development Director for QUAD, the role I have led on, since 2002. As part of this role we have:

- led on the capital fundraising from the major public agencies, putting the capital funding in place, in time
- acted as client co-ordinator on design and construction, with the building on site in Winter 2006 and open in Autumn 2008
- established the organisation and helped recruit QUAD's Board and Chief Executive, Keith Jeffery

- Developed structures for management, programming, governance and operating the new building.

Later this month we hand over the reins. To mark the opening of QUAD and DPA's part in its journey, we are hosting a symposium in the city in November. Professionals from the regeneration and cultural sectors will be taking part in discussion and debate centred on the QUAD story. DPA is also publishing an article by Sarah Wedderburn, following the QUAD journey and highlighting some of the histories of participation, regeneration and community engagement that have informed QUAD's development.

Peter Mount is a member of DPA's Core Consultancy Team and has been Development Director for QUAD since 2002. If you would like more information on either the symposium or the forthcoming article please call Pete on 020 7713 8100 or email Peter.Mount@dpa-ltd.co.uk

What's the point? Planning for culture and the creative industries in the Thames Gateway



by David Powell

Times for planners and developers of large scale regeneration projects get harder and harder: credit crunch, soaring energy costs, a slow economy, increasingly complex environmental conditions, rapidly changing demographics and intractable deprivation. Add to this the seeming impossibility of establishing sustainable cost structures for mega-projects, and it's no wonder that government and the private sector want to focus on getting the basics of physical regeneration in place.

So, what is the point of planning for culture and creative enterprise in the London Thames Gateway?

Extensive evidence shows how - planned early and delivered intelligently - the cultural and creative dividend can make ordinary places distinctive. Cultural expression and creative activity is good for community building, allowing people to make the most of their talents and energies. It is good for business, giving development a competitive edge. It is fundamental to the Government's agenda of quality placemaking.

Thames Gateway London Partnership has long identified culture and creative enterprise as an important component of London Gateway's future promoting valued research, advocacy and projects. It is working with partners to promote an investment and planning approach that building on a strong evidence and mapping base and on real and proposed cultural projects and plans put forward by local authorities, cultural bodies and cultural agencies.

The last thirty years have seen many examples of timely and effective investment and activity in culture, which forward-thinking Government, local authorities and private sector partners have acknowledged is well evidenced and contributes substantially to sense of place, community and individual health, and to local prosperity.

We must ensure that current hard times do not bring on another bout of institutional amnesia about the value of culture in making great places and healthy communities. Let's build on accepted evidence, and sustain support for the cultural and creative turn in regeneration, particularly in the complex and sensitive geography of the Thames Gateway.

David Powell set up DPA in 1991. He is Adviser for Culture and Creative Industries to Thames Gateway London Partnership. This argument was also reflected in an article in *Renew* (July 2008), TGLP's occasional magazine. For more information contact David on David.Powell@dpa-ltd.co.uk

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Kick-starting inter-culturalism on a world stage

by Prakash Daswani



Earlier this year, the British Council launched its new Creative Cities project at a symposium in Melbourne. DPA was invited to produce a discussion paper aimed at kick-starting the involvement of practitioners and policymakers from East Asia and together DPA and Cultural Co-Operations co-authored *Interculturalism and Creativity in the 21st Century City*.

Creative Cities a three year, worldwide project has four broad themes defined as: working with artists and designers to re-imagine our cities; promoting accessibility and participation; transforming public spaces; and supporting creative entrepreneurs.

We explored the emergence of interculturalism in the UK, highlighting examples of successful arts-based responses from Belfast to Birmingham, whilst focusing in particular on London, Britain's pre-eminent "World City". We grouped these examples into the following categories: community-generated initiatives; emergent institutions; city-led initiatives; and cultural projects & places of conflict.

We addressed the issue of cultural leadership in order to identify what kinds of things need to be put in place - and by whom - "to create a more conducive environment for intercultural creativity and innovation".

It seemed timely given this broader conceptual context - and given contemporary discourse around such notions as "Britishness", "multiculturalism", and "cultural diversity" - to re-define some of the main terms of reference of this debate.

It also made sense to clarify the distinction between creativity and innovation. This in turn, led us to illuminate some of the key characteristics of "intercultural innovators", both at grassroots level, that is, within new or embryonic communities of world citizens, and in the seemingly inaccessible major institutions of state.

The paper concluded with a set of challenges, framed as recommendations and questions for organisers and participants in the project, to provoke both action and reflection throughout its three-year international journey.

To read the paper in full go to [Interculturalism and creativity in the 21st century city](#) . For more information about the paper contact David at David.Powell@dpa-ltd.co.uk

Prakash Daswani is the Director of Cultural Co-operation, an independent London-based arts charity with an unparalleled 20 year track record of promoting cross cultural contact, dialogue and understanding. www.culturalco-operation.org.



First Steps - Cultural Footprints in the South East

by Debra Reay

We've recently completed two 'Cultural Footprint' reviews in the South East, one with three Universities in Canterbury - Canterbury Christchurch

University, the University College for the Creative Arts and University of Kent - the other with the University of Brighton. Inspired by Arts Council England's Strategy for Higher Education and commissioned by Arts Council England South East, Cultural Footprints are aimed at getting a better understanding of the extent of the Universities' cultural resources intended for public and business benefit.

What is clear from these early studies is that the full range of the Higher Education Institutions' cultural resources are often hidden from public view and are therefore not always attracting the attention that they might.

Both studies have revealed more activity than the commissioners had anticipated and have increased awareness and respect for the scope of University involvement in the local cultural ecology. In Canterbury, the review has stimulated active discussion with the City Council to improve the profile and marketing of their combined cultural offer.

With Higher Education Institutions encouraged to demonstrate benefits to the wider community, Cultural Footprints are one way of highlighting the resources they already offer. At one level, the Footprint is simply a list of the available human and physical resource: at another, it is an active process of revealing and reflecting on the variety, value and extent of cultural activities that Universities provide.

At DPA we think this model has real value and we'd be pleased to develop it with other HEIs, Regional Arts Council Offices and Local Authorities. Contact us if you are interested in commissioning a review. To view the Canterbury Cultural Footprint go to http://www.dpa-ltd.co.uk/documents/canterbury_cfr.pdf

Debra Reay joined DPA as a Director of the company earlier this year having worked as an Associate since 2003. Call her for more information about Cultural Footprints, 020 8989 4434 or debra.reay@dpa.co.uk.

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