

on the w@terfront



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Art neighbourhoods, ports of vitality

Port cities have a special cosmopolitan charm which makes them particularly attractive to artists and, of course, no less interesting for researchers devoted to urban studies, most prominently those studying urban decline and redevelopment, because many traditional port cities are suffering from heavy unemployment and redundant maritime facilities since the generalisation, in the 1970s, of the modern roll-on/roll-off loading and unloading of containers, which required brand new ports in deeper waters. Further proof of the burgeoning interest in these matters is the number of papers devoted to port cities featuring in this symposium of ours, entitled "Waterfronts of Art"; nevertheless, I feel the need to justify the particular approach of this paper, because hitherto the work of the Public Art Observatory has been primarily concerned with the impact of "public art" on urban regeneration processes, whilst I would like to open up such target to broadly consider the public urban scene where creators and consumers of art interrelate. We all agree that it is not just with an artistic make-up of open-air sculptures and installations parachuted by politicians that city ghettos are going to be cured, only the presence of "artists in residence" working in a grass-roots art project in contact with the locals can assure some success. But then, it is time to consider as well the existence of artists' studios, or the mere presence of artists in the cafés, in the shops, just in the streets of an urban area, as a stimulus for its revitalisation. What happened in Montmartre and Montparnasse in the Paris of the Belle Époque, can happen again in a derelict port area, as it occurred in the SoHo district of New York in the 1970s or the Temple Bar area of Dublin has showed in the 1980s.

Yet, the special contribution of the arts-scene to urban boosting is usually analysed in the ever growing bibliography available as the culmination of a long coveted recuperation of some highlights of our architectural heritage. At the most, certain publications have paid tribute to the role of new cultural venues as 'flagships' of some processes of image-betterment and urban regeneration. My aim here is to point out that the birth of art districts is not merely the consequence of a renewal process but also a decisive catalyst for the further re-use of other nearby derelict buildings for art purposes and, in general, for the boosting of standards of living. Thus this is not yet another study of the trickle-down economic benefits created by cultural policies in distressed areas; but a plea for art investments to be wisely devised, aiming also at producing some knock-on impact in cultural targets. In order to emphasise this perspective the title chosen for this essay avoids the term "urban renewal" usually linked to physical change, preferring instead 'urban regeneration' -i.e. the revitalising not just of dilapidated buildings but also a deteriorated quality of life.

Previous work on this topic had shown very interesting examples in districts of New York, Baltimore, Paris, Dublin, Barcelona, Berlin or London. But obviously in such rich and burgeoning cities urban revitalisation has been boosted by an array of vested interests, among which the arts sector was just one component -and not necessarily the most consequential. No matter the size and history of the arts presence in particular districts, it seems obvious that any derelict area in the heart of a prosperous city is bound to be revitalised by urban developers anyway. However, the prospects of redevelopment are less likely when dereliction lays in the middle of a declining city facing economic recession, unemployment, depopulation, social/ethnic unrest,

and physical decay. If we can show that even in such adverse circumstances, arts-led regeneration can prosper, then we would have demonstrated its deeds beyond doubt. Liverpool and Marseilles are such cases: in the last decades everything seems to have gone wrong there, except the arts, which constitute the most world-known winning asset of both cities' limited resources. Indeed, it is their cultural glamour what makes Liverpool and Marseilles especially interesting amongst many other cases of recent urban decay. As if to compensate for their worse fate in economic statistics and the troubled waters of their political context, both cities rank very high in the arts. As it is well known, the two cities have become famous in modern times for the performing arts and popular music, which has no doubt played a part in encouraging people to take a pride in their local life, and both passionately support the high profile of their football teams. Less celebrated is perhaps another common cultural characteristic that I have chosen to discuss here: Liverpool has the most notable network of museums in England after London, whilst Marseilles is in France second only to Paris. Moreover, the density of studios in Marseilles also makes of it the second artist's capital of France while Liverpool has more artists per head of its multicultural population than anywhere else in the country.

This paper draws on research about the role of the arts sector in urban regeneration which I started as postdoctoral research-fellow at the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester (UK), then continued at the Department of Art History, University of Saragossa (Spain). I first focused on comparing recent developments in Liverpool with similar ones in Marseilles; this gathered momentum on the occasion of the one-day symposium 'The Role of Museums and the Arts in the Urban Renewal of Liverpool' (Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 21st October 1995) which was the origin of a book I edited (Lorente, 1996). Then, wanting to expand the picture, I looked for other point of comparison: Bilbao, Glasgow and Genoa might equally qualify as appropriate further study cases, but I went for a general review of the situation in several Spanish cities (Lorente, 1997). This paper condenses some of the findings discussed in such earlier works, bringing out new examples and more matured ideas which I have lately acquired attending some international conferences on the topic. I am immensely grateful to the colleagues that have thus stimulated and enriched my work, particularly the other members of the Public Art Observatory. But a special acknowledgement of gratitude must be made, above all, to the artists and gallerists who, notwithstanding their heavy work-schedule, found some time to answer my questions and providing me with information on their organisations. This paper is in a way my homage for their essential contribution to cultural politics of urban regeneration.

Arts in derelict quarters. Historical precedents and recent trends.

The installation of artists in forlorn urban spaces is by no means a new phenomenon peculiar of our time. Ancien Regime Courts used to accommodate scholars and artists in poor garrets and attic rooms of aristocratic palaces, or in disused buildings. For example, when Versailles became the official dwelling of the French Court, two Parisian palaces deserted by the royal family were gradually handed over to artists and craftspeople: a number of studio apartments for pensionnaires du Roi were allowed between 1608 and 1806 in the Louvre, some of them near the stables, others on the top floor above the Grande Galerie, while part of the abandoned Luxembourg Palace was offered to the painter Charles Parrocel in 1745. This practice became an established policy after the French Revolution. The church of Cluny, the chapel of the Sorbonne, the convents of the Petits-Augustins, Carmes and Capucins, the Louvre and many empty palaces abandoned in their flight into exile by the enemies of the new Republic, were partly given to artists -one hundred years later the Bolshevik Revolution did the same in Russia. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century it was an established vogue for artists in great art capitals to take lodgings collectively in derelict religious or aristocratic buildings -the Nazarens at the ex-convent of Sant'Isidoro in Rome, Whistler with John Singer Sargent and others at the dilapidated Palazzo Rezzonico of Venice.

As much as this cultural practice was grounded on what Alois Riegl called the monument value of some architectural heritage, this was perhaps a corollary of the fact that such buildings were in many cases the only sites available at affordable price in the city centres. Similarly, the re-use of abandoned buildings for museums has been one of the key cultural policies ever since the French Revolution, when many deserted aristocratic palaces and deconsecrated churches and monasteries were turned into art galleries. Of course, that was mainly a political move, by which

spaces hitherto closed to the general public were opened to the citizens (Poulot, 1986). Nevertheless, it is clear that such policy contributed to the conservation of historic buildings threatened by ruin and disrepair. Such was the case of Alexandre Lenoir's Musée des Monuments Français at the Petits-Augustins, and also of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers at the abbey of St. Martin-des-Champs, the art galleries of the Louvre, Versailles and the Luxembourg Palaces, or the Musée Cluny in Paris. This was soon emulated in the provinces in the locating of other well-known art museums. For example in Strasbourg the palace of the prince-bishops, in Dijon the palace of the earls of Bourgogne, in Lille the Recollets convent, in Toulouse the Augustins, in Reims the abbey of St. Denis, in Arras that of St. Waast, in Lyon the abbey St. Pierre, in Aix the Hospitaliers priory (Monnier, 1995: p. 104). In nineteenth-century France alone the list seems inexhaustible! But soon the neighbouring countries followed suit, installing some of their most prestigious art museums in former palaces -like the Fine Arts Museum of Brussels at the Ancienne Cour or the National Museum of Sculpture at the Bargello in Florence- or in ex-religious buildings -e.g. the Museo Nacional de la Trinidad in Madrid and the Germanisches Museum of Nürnberg.

Nevertheless, interesting as the above examples might be as historic precedents, it seems clear that the present vogue of bringing the arts into forlorn buildings is a new trend that started with the post-industrial economic restructuring which took place after World War II. Entire inner-city industrial quarters born on the wake of early capitalism, then became obsolete and redundant; but their brick and cast iron buildings infested with rats, lacking of baths, terribly cold in winter, revealed themselves to be immensely attractive to modern artists because the rent was cheap. Converted factories, workhouses, slaughterhouses, hangars, silos and warehouses allowed a modern return to the role of the artist as host of meetings, parties, debates and artistic 'happenings' -social historians could compare such places to the usually huge and equally convivial artists' studios of the 19th century. These vast spaces made possible the creation of large-scale art-works, so typical of the artists of Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art and Minimalism, the pioneers in the re-occupation, legal or not, of such buildings during the 1950s and early 60s! New York, then emerging as world artistic Mecca, produced the most influential examples, like



A street in SoHo, New York City.

Andy Warhol's Factory or the co-operatives of artists living in SoHo lofts promoted by George Maciunas and the Fluxus movement (Zukin, 1982; Simpson, 1981; Broner, 1986, Crane, 1987).

Thus, thanks to the initiative and vision of some social outcasts, jewels of a then devalued heritage of 'industrial archaeology' escaped destruction. The agitated new life of these places embodied the alternative culture of the late 1960s and early 70s. In Europe, like in the U.S.A., former commercial/industrial capitals also hosted famous examples of this urban fashion for art venues in alternative places: London (Albany Empire, Arts Lab, Middle Earth, Oval House, Round House), Amsterdam (Melkweg, Paradiso, Kosmos), Hamburg (Die Fabrik), Copenhagen (Huset) and Brussels (Ferme V). When a 19th-century hospital of Berlin was transformed in 1973-76 into Künstlerhaus Bethanien, a cultural centre and studios for artists, the re-use of warehouses and similar industrial edifices for artists' studios had become a common policy everywhere; especially in London, allegedly the city with the largest population of artists in Europe, where during the last twenty years hundreds of buildings have been converted by

developers, artists' co-operatives, and artists' associations like SPACE Art Services, created in 1968, or ACME Studio, established in 1972, which provide cheap apartments and studio spaces (Williams, 1993; Jones, 1995). It has been primarily thanks to such well-established initiatives that 'industrial archaeology' sites with their huge brick-made vaults have become so much in vogue as a setting for artists¹

Most interestingly, modern artists and art critics love these new kind of spaces, considering them as challenges to contemporary creation. Actually, since 1983 there exists a European network called Trans Europe Halles, linking independent art centres installed in warehouses, market-halls, factories, etc². Membership now stands at around twenty members: Bloom (in Mezzago, near Milan), City Arts Centre (Dublin), Confort Moderne (Poitiers), Halles de Schaerbeek (Brussels), Huset (Aarhus), Kaapelitehdas (Helsinki), Kultur Fabrik (Luxembourg), Kultur Fabrik (Koblenz), Kulturhuset (Bergen), L'Usine (Geneve), Mejeriet (Lund), Melkweg (Amsterdam), Moritzbastei (Leipzig), Retina (Ljubljana), Rote Fabrik (Zürich), The Junction (Cambridge), Ufa-Fabrik (Berlin), Vooruit (Gent), Waterfront (Norwich), W.U.K. (Vienna). A number of associated-members complement this register: Hôpital Ephemere (Paris), La Friche Belle de Mai (Marseilles), Ileana Tounta Art Center (Athens), Kaapelitehdas (Helsinki), Kulturhuset USF (Bergen), Mylos (Tessalonica), Multihus Tobaksfabrikken (Esbjerg), Noorderligt (Tilburg), Petöfi Csarnok (Budapest), Retina-Metelkova (Ljubljana), Tranway (Glasgow).

Now we are living the emergence of another European network, younger and with no name, rules or definition, linking artists' run organisations; and although the location in reused premises is not a prerequisite to be a member, many of the groups and spaces belonging to it are situated in urban regeneration quarters -for example BBB in Toulouse, B16 in Birmingham, Catalyst Arts in Belfast, Cubitt in London, Peripherie in Tübingen, Purgatori in Valencia, Raum für Kunst in Graz, or indeed Konstakuten in Stockholm, which acted as host of all of them at the First European Seminar of Artists' Run Spaces in May 1999. Of course, apart from the art spaces belonging to such international networks, many others active on their own feet are also to be considered. But it would be a daunting



Tacheles Cultural Centre in East Berlin: ruins of a bombed shopping mall now used by artists.

and impossible task to discuss here the vast number of initiatives whereby grass-roots communities of artists are animating derelict buildings. One can only try to add a few names of well-known initiatives similarly installed in former warehouses or industrial buildings. At the end of the 1980s, a contemporary art centre, 'Tinglado 2', opened in a rebuilt warehouse on Tarragona's port waterfront. The Centre d'Art 'Usine Fromage' in Darnétal, near Rouen, is installed in a former cheese factory. Since 1994, a co-operative of artists in Liège have occupied the 'Space 251 Nord', the 19th-century building of a coal mining company. In the North of England, the model village of Saltaire built by the industrialist Titus Salt in 1853 to become the main site of the textile belt of Bradford, has been brought back to life by the painter Jonathan Silver, who has developed in a huge mill complex he bought in 1987 a combination of shopping, performing arts and art exhibition activities -including a permanent gallery featuring works by Bradford-born pop artist David Hockney. In what used to be East Berlin two former breweries of the Prenzlauerberg district, are now very popular drinking, shopping and art places for the urban flaneurs and night socialites. This is by no means a comprehensive and closed

list, because there are increasingly more and more redevelopments like these. Every year, new examples of these kinds of grassroots initiatives are mushrooming all over Europe. The secret of their success³ consists in a mixed formula: restaurants, salad bars, cafes, bistros, alternative shops, young radio broadcasting, art exhibitions, art studios, nightlife, festivals, life music, cinema, theatre, dance... all within one complex of buildings in a former industrial estate. The atmosphere in such places is usually a cosy mingling of fringe artists and thriving alternative multi-cultural social groups -hippies, punks, gays, Blacks, Arabs, Sub-Americans.

New wine in old barrels: museums of contemporary art in age-old buildings.

Parallel to the reuse of forlorn building by artists, another change in the cultural scene brought back the newest museums to the city fabric and into previously existing buildings. Some have returned to the old policy of re-using grand historic houses: old palaces (like the museums devoted to Picasso both at the hôtel Salé in the Marais of Paris and the palacio Berenguer in the Gothic Quarter of Barcelona), convents (a branch of Valencia's IVAM -Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno- inaugurated in 1989, is situated in the ex-cloister of the Carmen), aristocratic castles (since 1984 the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Castello di Rivoli; or the Contemporary Art Centre of the Château d'Oiron since 1987), charity hospitals (in Edinburgh the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art has, since 1984 been housed on the site of a former school originally built as a hospital in 1820; in Madrid, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Moderno 'Reina Sofia' opened in 1986 in an ex-hospital; whilst in Barcelona and Marseilles two hospices for the poor called Casa de la Caritat and Vielle Charité have been transformed in museums/exhibition centres in the late 1980s; and in Dublin the Irish Museum of Modern Art opened in 1991 at the old Royal Hospital Kilmainham).

A step forward in this way has been the musealisation of some of the most typical city landmarks of a more recent architectural heritage called 'industrial archaeology'. It seems an irony of History that our post-modern/ post-industrial age treats the inherited architectural emblems of the industrial era in the same way as the revolutionaires used the empty palaces and convents, symbolic legacy of the Ancien Régime! A dramatic milestone in this new tendency was the refurbishment of Orsay train station in 1986 for the display of nineteenth-century art (as a matter of fact, the Musée d'Orsay can be considered in many ways as a banner of post-modern policies: cf. Lorente, 1994). In Paris this museological vogue arrived too late to save Baltard's food-market halls... But one could speculate that, had the urban renewal of Les Halles and the 'plateau Beaubourg' taken place some years later, the Centre d'Art et Culture George Pompidou might have been housed there instead. In fact, in the general comeback of art galleries to



Richmond House in Hackney, London: a former garage now headquarters of MOMART and reused by the association SPACE for artists' studios

old city districts, cast-iron market-halls have served suitably in other French cities⁴. Since 1985 Rennes' Halle d'Art Contempo-rain brought new life to the former Criée aux Pois-sons, whilst the Centre d'Art Con-temporain 'La Halle' of Pont-en-Royans opened in 1986 in a covered market-hall and the Centre National d'Art Con-temporain 'Le Magasin' in Gre-noble exhibits art since 1986 in a former covered market, built in 1900 by the workshops of Gustave Eiffel. Other 19th-century structures have been similarly used. Most remarkably, defunct train stations: in Berlin the new Museum of Contemporary art has opened in 1996 at Hamburger-Bahnhof. But practically any other civic landmark of our grandparents' time can now become a museum, be it

a water-tower -like the old and picturesque water-tower in the Scottish town of Perth now home to the Fergusson Gallery-, or municipal bath-houses -e.g. the Espace Départemental d'Art Contemporain of Chauvigny-, or ex-slaughter-houses -in 1984 the Grande Halle de La Villette in Paris became a mixed-use space for exhibitions, fairs, music venues, etc... and soon a similar place in Toulouse will open as its Musée d'Art Moderne.

Not surprisingly, some of the most successful interventions in bringing back to modern life these 'industrial archaeology' monuments have been museums/centres of modern and contemporary art. Most celebrated, internationally, have been for example some of the newest U.S. museums of contemporary art like the Temporary/Contemporary (TC) of Los Angeles, a branch of the 'L.A. MOCA' opened in 1983 in an old warehouse and police garage, or the new branch of the Guggenheim Museum New York, opened in 1992 in downtown Manhattan, re-using a characteristic 19th-century SoHo warehouse built out of cast-iron and brick. But, for once, Europe has also been in the lead on this matter. In France, a pioneering example of this has been the Centre d'Arts Plastiques Contemporain (CAPC) de Bordeaux, which was opened at the entrepôts Lainé as early as 1979. Liverpool followed in 1984 with another astonishing example, the restoration of a huge nineteenth-century dock-warehouse, the Albert Dock, as a mixed-use complex featuring the 'Tate Gallery of the North'. We shall soon discuss this example in particular, but in general the resurrection of derelict warehouses could be quoted as one of the focal contributions of the latest generation of museums/centres for contemporary art. In the old port of Bristol, the Arnolfini Arts Centre was established in 1976 within a former tea warehouse dating from 1830. In Newport, the main town of the Isle of Wight, the Quay Arts Centre opened in 1982 in a former warehouse on the docks. In Edinburgh, the City Art Centre opened in 1980 in a 19th-century warehouse. Ostend's Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst was established in 1986 in a former warehouse-workshop built in the 1940s. Antwerp's contemporary art museum Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen- was inaugurated in 1987 in a renovated grain silo. In Rotterdam, the veteran 'Witte de With' is a contemporary art complex installed in a converted warehouse/workshop. Also in Antwerp the Photography Museum -Museum voor Fotografie- has been situated in a former warehouse dating from 1911. In Poitiers the Centre for Contemporary Art and Music has kept the building of a household appliance warehouse and also its name: 'Le confort moderne'. A former wine cellar is now the new L.A.C. (Lieu d'Art Contemporain) of Sigean.

Not second to the warehouses come the old factories, foremost symbol of the past industrial era. These austere buildings of brick, metal and glass have become most cherished settings for the leisure of visitors in our post-Fordist age. It is already a long time since Oxford's Museum of Modern Art was located in a 19th-century brewery building. Similarly, in Thiers the Centre d'Art Contemporain 'Le Creux de l'Enfer' was set up in the former cutlery factory. Since 1991, the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst in Aachen, has been located in a vast umbrella factory. A former workshops' building in Zaragoza, Spain, has been since 1994 the Museo Pablo Serrano and in 1998 the Andalusian Centre for Contemporary Art was established at the former porcelain factory of Seville's Cartuja. In Schaffhausen, Switzerland, the contemporary art collector Urs Rausmüller remodelled in 1982-83 a former textile factory from the beginning of the century, in order to create a new museum, the Hallen für Neue Kunst. Established between 1976 and 1980 in a renovated area of Basel, the Contemporary Art Museum -Museum für Gegenwartskunst- occupies two old industrial buildings. Created in 1991 the F.A.E. Musée d'Art Contemporain de Pully, Lausanne, enjoys about 1500 square meters of exhibit space in the former Teintureries Lyonnaises -Lyon dye works. In Tilburg, South of the Netherlands, an abandoned factory has recently been reopened by the Foundation de Pont for Contemporary Art. In 1995 the city of Maastricht has reopened the Wiebengahal, an old factory now listed as the first Dutch construction in reinforced concrete, which now houses the Bonnefantenmuseum. In Malmö, the largest city in southern Sweden, the local businessman Fredrik Roos opened in 1988 a museum of contemporary art called Rooseum, installed in a former electric power-station. Similarly, in London the new extension of the Tate Gallery will open soon after the year 2000 in a former electric power-station. Thus, public funded museums/centres of modern art are now often conceived as a symbolic reappropriation by the citizens in general of work-sites of the industrial age which used to be closed to outsiders and were emblematic of the absolute dominion exerted on the premises by the private businessmen who owned them.

More synergisms art scene/urban boosting.



Spitalfield Market, London (entrance to the artists' studios of Spitalfield's Art Project)

If complexes of artists' studios and museums have become everywhere, during the 1980s and 90s, a favourite tool for the preservation of our urban heritage, they have not been the sole factor in the vitalisation of deserted heartlands. Post-Modernism has brought along a complete desacralisation of the ideal of heritage; it now includes aesthetically unpretentious buildings of social housing, and the humble houses of historic city centres, whose destruction is nowadays opposed by conservation movements (Ballé, 1984; Green, 1987; Minissi, 1988; Neyret, 1992: p. 9; Jiménez-Blanco, 1993). These had not been thought of as 'historical' city landmarks, yet it is undeniable that their history is interwoven with the social history of the place and, in many cases, they are rather attractive spaces.

Therefore, it is not surprising that commercial galleries specialising in avantgarde works are migrating from 'banal' bourgeois environments to 'historic' quarters too. The most striking case is the world's art capital, New York: the old warehouses of SoHo have been bursting with galleries of modern art since Leo Castelli moved there in 1971, however antiques dealers have remained in the rich midtown district further North. In Paris this cleavage is less clear, but it is still more or less true that the classic distribution of the art market in the central rive droite/rive gauche areas is not so popular now for 'marchands' of modern art, who tend to concentrate in two urban renewal districts, the Marais and the Bastille. In London too, a young alternative to the traditional dealers in antiques and old masters of Bond Street at the luxurious West-End is emerging with the modern art galleries installed in the old warehouses of Charlotte Road, the Surrey Docks and the Covent Garden area. It seems that even private art collectors have been lured by the appeal of such buildings. Many an art-patron likes gathering modern art-works on store/display in an old structure, as proof of the case of the famous Saatchi Collection in London, installed in an ex-factory of paintings.

Last but not least in this discussion weights the contribution of real estate companies and urban developers. There are some sociological considerations to be made at this point. Long past are the times when living and working in converted buildings in ex-industrial districts was left to the social outcasts. There is no place here to undertake a general review of this fascinating social phenomenon. But the fact is that, ironically enough, whole urban districts of warehouses, factories and 'industrial archaeology' heritage are today very sought after by the fashionable and wealthy. Now 'loft-living' is socially in vogue and enjoys great popularity with young people and business people. Thus, catering for this new social market, both private and public developers are more and more seeking for market-halls, ex-churches, factories, mills and warehouses to convert them into small studio-apartments for singles, shopping malls and festival markets. Essentially the new use tends to be an extravagant offer of business centres, shops, hotels, office suites and loft-apartments for yuppies, although other usual services also include recreational sites, sport facilities, leisure amenities, community workshops, research/higher education centres, workspace for small firms (Hall, 1988: p. 264; Colquhoun, 1995: p. 21-23).



Cultural Centre of Belem (Lisbone) by Gregotti

But it is becoming ever clearer that the presence of art venues can attract occupants and activities which also require large areas of cheap, flexible space (Keens et al., 1989). This formula of cultural amenities in mixed-use developments has been widely experienced and studied in America (Porter, 1980; Snedcof, 1985). Perhaps the best known and most studied cases are major redevelopments of run-down port areas: Baltimore's waterfront, Chicago's North Pier, Boston's Quincy Market, Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco.

In Europe, other port-cities have experienced similar initiatives: Thessalonica's port, Genoa's water-front, Barcelona's Port Vell, Lisbon's Belém district, Antwerp Docklands, Amsterdam's Neumarkt, Hamburg old port, Temple Bar in Dublin, Cardiff Bay, the Docklands and the Covent Garden area in London all feature new museums and illustrious art amenities or will do so in a near future. But as we shall now see, perhaps the most outstanding examples have come out in the two cities brought here as case-studies.

A tale of two cities: Liverpool and Marseilles.



Cable Factory, Helsinki: now an art complex with studios, exhibitions and performance spaces.

The urban fabric of Liverpool and Marseilles is different from that of most European metropolises. A geographer consulting modern maps will find they are the capitals of two densely urbanised regions called Merseyside and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, but these correspond to the new administrative boundaries put into effect in Britain and France since the 1970s; in fact, neither Liverpool nor Marseilles had historically a subordinated hinterland, for the one was part of Lancashire and the other used to depend on Aix. Similarly, a traveller approaching them by land or by sea, will be misled by the typical silhouettes towering over their respective cityscapes, the Anglican and the Catholic cathedrals in one case, the Major cathedral and the Basilica of Notre-Dame de la Garde in the other: actually, these are quite recent monuments. Liverpool received a charter as early as 1207 and Marseilles, established in 600 B.C., can boast to be the oldest city in France, but neither of the two was an historic cathedral-city. Only in the 17th and 18th centuries did they both become booming and massive cities. Subsequently, at the peak of British and French colonialism, they became the main ports for those embarking to the colonies, for the importation of raw materials from these colonies, and

for the exportation of manufactured goods to them. Liverpool was designated, during the 19th and early 20th century, with the sobriquet 'Gateway to Empire' and Marseilles was then nicknamed 'Porte de l'Orient'. Accordingly, their most characteristic urban landmarks are on the one hand the stone façades lavishly built on the main waterfront to accommodate the central headquarters of the navigation or insurance companies, and on the other hand the functional brick-architecture of the docks and numerous warehouses which mushroomed in the vicinity of the port to keep stocks of cotton, timber, tobacco, sugar, food (Smith, 1953; Bailey & Millington, 1957; Sammarco & Morel, 1985 & 1988; Roncayolo, 1990; Aughton, 1993; Hughes, 1993).

These facilities became obsolete in the aftermath of World War II. The docks and railway goods terminals and warehouses were shut down by modern ways for the transportation of goods, particularly containerisation. The once long and labour intensive loading and offloading of cargoes was replaced by a direct transit of containers between lorries and ships. Deeper waters, larger hangars and parking-sites were required instead of the old linear docks to locate bulk terminals, container ports and roll-on/roll-off methods of loading and unloading ships. Hence, in the 1960s and early 70s, the MDHC (Mersey Docks and Harbour Company) and the DATAR (Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale) created concrete-made ports, gaining new space to the sea, in Seaforth and Fox-sur-Mer respectively (Hyde, 1971; Al Naib, 1991; Bonillo, 1991; Borruey, 1992; Borruey & Fabbre, 1992; Brunier, 1993; Hughes, 1993; De Roo, 1994). Moreover, not only was the bulk of port-related activities transferred out of Liverpool's and Marseilles' city centres, but also the ownership of their merchant, industrial and food-processing business was taken over by international corporations based elsewhere.

This became of great consequence for the present physical decay of both cities, which starkly contrasts with their past situation speculation in the building industry and in real estate was a secure investment for the local elites in case of ruinous disasters at sea. Finally, the new political and economic realities in Europe had done the rest. With the decolonisation process and the launching of the European Community, both cities, have found themselves far from the new routes of wealth. Since Rotterdam acts as the central port of Europe, its more peripheral competitors have been condemned to languish in the backwaters and the urban effects of this are especially manifest in Liverpool and Marseilles, although this is also true in Catania, Genoa, Vigo, Bilbao, Bristol, Glasgow, Antwerp and Hamburg. Economic decline, unemployment, crime, depopulation, urban dereliction, political radicalism and social violence have been endemic in Liverpool and Marseilles since the world economic crisis of 1974 -with particular virulence perhaps in the early 1980s (Cousins et al., 1980; O'Connor, 1986 & 1990; Donzel, 1992; Becquart, 1994).

However, the shifting geography of macroeconomics does not explain all the recent misfortunes of Liverpool and Marseilles. Neighbouring towns like Blackpool, Southport and Chester on the one hand, or Nice, Cannes and Arles on the other, enjoy a better fate related to their popularity as tourism resorts and, increasingly, as retailing centres -the middle classes living in wealthy suburbs of the Wirral drive for their shopping to Chester instead of the centre of Liverpool, and the well-to-do inhabitants of the terraced chalets near Marseilles' Prado-beach favour Aix or Cassis. But the counterpoint is still more striking when contrasting Liverpool and Marseilles to their great rivals, Manchester and Lyons⁵; these traditional hubs of textile manufacturing have successfully overcome their post-industrial crisis to become fashionable for their tertiary sector. Thus, Liverpool and Marseilles are mainly suffering from a bad image, which is to a great extent a problem of poor self-image. Yet, no matter how strong the criticisms, it is nevertheless curious the level of attraction and personal attachment the two cities provoke amongst both locals and foreigners. They certainly have a special charm; people might find them environmentally degraded, dirty, strident, dangerous, but never unattractive. There is a cultural dimension to this. Liverpool and Marseilles are vastly proletarian, cosmopolitan and multicultural cities. Their people are renowned in their respective countries for their vivacity, humour, strong clans linkages... and because they speak a very peculiar English and French. All this is just commonplace, but is part of their glamour and cultural image (Cornelius, 1982; Baillon, 1989).



Friche de la Belle de Mai, Marseilles: a former tobacco factory now housing an art complex with studios, alternative theatres, and a radio station.

Recently, both cities developed a cluster of museums in urban regeneration areas. A gallery of arts and crafts -Maison de l'Artisanat et des Métiers d'Art- was created in 1983 and located in Marseilles' newly restored 17th century naval dockyard of galleys. Also in Marseilles, a new Gallery of Contemporary Art opened in 1993 in a modern building aping an industrial architecture while in Liverpool the former Midland Railways Goods Depot has been restored to house the Conservation Centre of the National Museums and Galleries of Merseyside. But I want to concentrate now on the two most important examples, both of them of great symbolic value: the Albert Dock in Liverpool and the Hospice de la Vieille Charité in Marseilles. The state of dereliction of these monuments, two of the most neglected landmarks of their heritage, was a most depressing sight at the very heart of Liverpool and Marseilles. Their restoration and opening to the public for mixed-use amenities, including several museums, has turned them into a proud shop window for the cities' image and has been consequential in the urban renewal of the surrounding area.

Liverpool's Albert Dock was designed by Jesse Hartley as the first enclosed dock warehouse in the world made entirely out of incombustible materials: cast iron, brick and granite. It opened in 1846 and closed in 1972 -but it was defunct long before that time (Ritchie-Noakes, 1984: p. 49-56; Cockcroft, 1994; Newell, s.d.). With its five blocks, each of five storeys, it is Britain's largest Grade I listed building. Its restoration, which cost circa £30m, was conducted by the MDC (Merseyside Development Corporation), one of the Urban Development Corporations created by the Government of Margaret Thatcher in 1980 in fierce opposition to some Labour-led local councils (Parkinson & Evans, 1988 & 1992). The riots of 1981 prompted the MDC to seek quickly a highly visible physical regeneration in part of the 865 depopulated acres under their command in Liverpool, Sefton, and the Wirral. Therefore, after largely unsuccessful attempts to redevelop the South Docks for industrial and commercial purposes, they turned towards a tourism and leisure-led strategy. The models for this strategy were the famous urban renewal developments based on leisure events like festivals, aquariums and museums, in the former decaying waterfront areas of the great American port cities: Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco in the 1970s, and more recently, New York's old port warehouses -South Street Seaport Museum- and Chicago -with the opening of the Maritime Museum and a Children's Museum. So, in 1984 an area of 50 ha of derelict oil installations, naphtha tanks and a domestic rubbish tip was developed to a greenhouse and theme gardens at a cost of £30m to hold an 'International Garden Festival' which attracted 2 million visitors but the site has remained underused since then. However, the best 'flagship' of MDC's achievements in developing the tourism industry in the city is the Albert Dock, which attracts between 2 and 3.5 million visitors annually.

Tourists are the most usual customers of the Beatles Story and the other public entertainments there, but it is worth pointing out that the Albert Dock's main leisure amenities are two major museums that are extremely popular amongst Liverpoolians too: the Maritime Museum and the Tate Gallery. The Merseyside Maritime Museum was inaugurated in 1984 at Block D of Albert Dock and other adjacent buildings. The Tate Gallery, opened in May 1988 based on designs of the celebrated Liverpool-trained architect James Stirling. Too many expectations for economic boosting and tourism attraction were raised on the arrival of a new branch of the Tate to Albert Dock. Only now this junior sibling of the national gallery of modern art is starting to be judged for

questions really related to contemporary art encouragement and curatorship (the same happened with the economic goals envisioned for MASS MoCa in North Adams, Massachusetts, cf. Zukin, 1995: 79-108). This led to disappointments and, most dangerously, to a feeling of estrangement between some Liverpoolians and the lavishly converted wharf, which was seen locally as a sort of horse of Troy, sheltering officials sent by the right-wing government in London for the conquest of left-wing Liverpool. It has taken much effort to normalise relations between this national museum and the local citizens. With time, this centre of excellence, whose exhibitions are mostly free of charge -as against the use in London-, has contributed a great deal to bridge the initial gulf of the MDC with the local community -unlike the London Development Corporation, whose investment in London's Isle of Dogs just created private offices. In particular, the Tate has upgraded artistic life in Liverpool with many small independent art galleries and studios have flourished since 1988 in the derelict warehouses of the Duke Street area: the part of the city between the Anglican Cathedral and the Albert Dock now known as 'the Creative Quarter'.



Air view of Le Panier district, Marseilles, showing the Vieille Charité complex in prominence.

Marseilles' poor-house, La Vieille Charité, was built in 1671-1745 based on plans by the local architect, sculptor and painter Pierre Puget at the heart of the city's most popular district, Le Panier. It lost its original function in 1883 subsequently becoming military barracks, tenants houses, improvised shelter for the homeless and then finally remaining empty and derelict. The building basically consists of a three-store patio with porticoes and, in the middle of it, an oblong chapel crowned by an astonishing dome. The works of restoration carried out from 1970 to 1986, at a cost of 99m francs were paid for by the city council, helped by the governments of the nation, the region and the province (Paire, 1991). Now the site houses several university institutions, four galleries for temporary exhibitions, a videotheque, the Maison de la Poesie, the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology, and the Museum of African, Oceanian and American-Indian Arts (the latter seems a particularly happy choice, considering the number of non-European citizens nearby).

The 'trickledown' effect on the physical renewal of the quarter has been immediate. First to follow suit were the public powers: the regional government restored another Baroque building just in front, an ex-convent, in which was installed the Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain, whilst the municipality refurbished old derelict houses nearby to open there the Maison de la Poesie and studios for artists. Now, many rundown houses in the area have been refurbished and reopened by private business catering for culture congoing out-migration of local artists to the capital. Consequently, Liverpool is now becoming a new Mecca for artists from other places, including London or foreign countries: the local organisations offering studio-spaces for artists (the Bluecoats, Bridewell, Arena, Off Stage, Quiggins, the Arts Palace) have waiting lists. Also, it is no coincidence that summers. It is true that, since they cannot afford costly architectural repairs, their contribution to urban renewal has just consisted in redecorating the premises⁶. Yet the mere presence of art-dealers and artists is in itself a great enhancement of the urban milieu. The Panier quarter was becoming a ghetto for social and ethnic minorities who had come to seek homes left empty by the departure of many of the traditional inhabitants in the quartier, like port-workers and sea-folk. Now this process is slowing down because of the arrival of art-

professionals, and the presence on the streets of a number of university students and tourists going to the Vieille Charité to attend classes or to see the latest exhibition.

Agents of the succesful "Creative Quarter" of Liverpool.

The typical paradigm of arts' led urban regeneration exposed hitherto gives half of the story. Specially in Liverpool, art-production spaces such as artist studios and community centres were not the only prime movers for the revitalisation of derelict areas of the city centre. Consumption-oriented art businesses have also been actively involved from the very beginning. In the immediate years after the opening of the Tate Gallery in Albert Dock, a number of empty Victorian warehouses of the Bold Street/Duke Street area were snapped up by commercial art galleries run by alternative art dealers or by art professionals turned 'mediators'. There was already an historic presence of art material suppliers in the area plus the shops and galleries of the Bluecoat Chambers, but the forerunner to the post-modern arrival of art-dealing hubbub in the area was the Hanover Galleries, founded by the painter Susan Prescott in 1983 in a charming Victorian building on 11-13 Hanover Street originally a cap and hat factory. Then, in 1984, an enterprising artist from Northern Ireland who studied at the Liverpool College of Art and was living in Toxteth, Janine Pinion, opened Acorn Gallery & Cafe in her own studio/kitchen, on the top floor of a former warehouse off Bold Street: this soon became the favourite meeting place in the Liverpool arts-scene for a vegetarian meal and a coffee.

The next step of the burgeoning Liverpool art scene on the wake of the birth of the Tate of the North, came in 1989 when sculptor Arthur Dooley and garage owner Alan Johnson, established their own gallery, The Liverpool Academy of Arts -no connection with the historic institution of that name founded by William Roscoe. The gallery, which, since 1990, has doubled as a theatre is located in a Seel Street warehouse provided by Exhaust Supplies: the house was already home to the Liver Sketching Club, a cafe, a shop, a studio of two sculptors and the workshop of a clothes designer... Such a neighbourhood offered a natural habitat to the new gallery, whose exhibitions feature mainly artists starting their professional careers. The new Merkmal Gallery, on the other hand, specialises in well-known national and continental modern artists and was opened in 1992 by Martin Ainscough and Wera von Reden-Hobhouse in a former shop and a semi-derelict city council property, at 5-9-11 Falkner Street -since 1995 it has become the Ainscough Gallery and also runs a trendy pavement cafe. Further, in 1994 the architect Ken Martin refurbished at his own expense the two top floors of a large warehouse building at 32-36 Hanover Street to install his studio and a gallery for private views of modern architecture and visual art displays, The View Gallery, which is somehow shrinking but still a very active part of the vibrant artistic life now animating the district.

This is not to say that every commercial venture has been a success story in the reconquest and recovery of derelict buildings in the area; that would be quite strange in this kind of business which is marked by many short-lived ventures. Less fortunate have been other recent commercial ventures, but the strength of the local arts-scene remains a great asset for the regeneration of the quarter as can be tested every-year in October on the occasion of the Visionfest Festival. This started as a series of open studio events and alternative exhibitions arranged by the local community of artists, but since 1992 it has become a unique national event, partly funded by the North West Arts Board and the City of Liverpool, collaborating with galleries, universities, communities artists' co-ops and individuals. As any other biennial or annual arts-festival, it works primarily as a public showcase for the latest art; but with the peculiarity that, on the other hand, Visionfest wants to work also as a hothouse for innovative art-making in new places: pubs, street billboards, warehouses, alternative galleries, ferries, schools, etc



Quiggins building in Liverpool, an alternative shopping centre with artists' studios on the top level.

From the very beginning, this booming of places for art production and consumption in a part of town containing many dilapidated landmarks of the Victorian splendour of Liverpool, has inevitably conjured up reminiscences of other famous art districts like SoHo in New York, that quarter of derelict Victorian warehouses in Manhattan turned a hot-spot for arts in the 1970s, which is now a luxurious area for tourists and celebrities. Such comparison is only brandished with anger and menace by Liverpool artists, who fear a similar process of gentrification will eventually substitute trendy yuppies for poor artists, but amongst other Liverpoolians outside the arts-scene the analogy only came as a wishful inspiration for promoting urban renewal. Policy makers and urban developers hoped for a massive arrival of creative people, acknowledging the tremendous appeal for young socialites entailed by a lively arts-scene. Liverpool City Council, the regional art administration and private developers started a publicity campaign claiming a new image for Liverpool, formerly a 'city of merchants', as a 'city of artists'.

Thus in 1989-90 Charterhouse Estates, a private London company with a vision for Liverpool, bought from the city corporation most of the properties of the area: more than three hundred buildings. It was hoped that, like in the Marais quarter of Paris, SoHo in New York, or Temple Bar in Dublin, a market-led renewal of these run-down buildings would succeed in attracting a young population of squandering urbanites to this district, which was thus optimistically renamed 'The Creative Quarter'. The idea was good, however selling the city properties to London-based urban developers instead of choosing local firms soon proved problematic, because as is well-known, the massive wreck of London Docklands truncated the London developers' investments in Liverpool. That was the case of Charterhouse Estates and the CZWG developing company, run by Roger Zogolovitch. The renewal of the 'Creative Quarter' came to a stand-still.

But now other developers of the Northern region are increasingly active in Liverpool's 'Creative Quarter'. Most remarkable is Urban Splash, a Manchester architects' partnership -based in a converted Victorian factory behind Piccadilly Station- run by two associates, Jonathan Falkingham and Tom Bloxham. They specialise in upgrading run-down inner areas by developing apartments, offices, pubs, clubs and young-life retailing. In Liverpool they have turned a number of Georgian warehouses in Slater Street and Wood Street into offices, tapas bars, youth shops (designer clothes, computer games, music, tattoos, etc). Often, as in The Liverpool Palace, they provide studio spaces for creative people (architects, designers, artists) or, as in Baaba Bar, they arrange temporary art exhibitions on the premises. Their strategy is to nurture a lively artist' presence as a means to enhance their establishments with an atmosphere of youth and alternative culture. In 1995 culminated the urban renewal operation of 'Concert Square' with the opening of a Victorian building, originally built for a chemical company, as loft studio apartments and bistros. Nevertheless, the most outstanding initiative in this respect remains the opening of a nearby Victorian building as the first great department store for clubwear, alternative shopping and second-hand bric-a-brac, called 'Quiggins' (a very successful business; so much so that Mr. Bloxham, its entrepreneur, has repeated the operation in a similar building in Manchester). Quiggins' of Liverpool is expanding, and the latest development in the premises has been the opening of the top floor by a group of artists, Merseyside Arts Base, who run an exhibitions gallery and five artists' studios. Thus even the

private market of urban developers and business people sees great benefits in nurturing artists and arts venues in terms of bettering the image of an urban area and attracting people to it. Hosting art exhibitions, inviting musicians and using designers is now becoming the new tune generally cheered by equally artist-friendly developers, like Urban Strategies, or other mixed-use centres for fashion shopping, like Trading Places or the Cream Shops. Furthermore, the burgeoning array of new night-life venues in the area, like Largo Bistro, Eve Bistro, The Jazz Club, The Gallery, Beluga Bar, and countless dance and music clubs (rock, jazz, house, dance, etc.) is making the 'Creative Quarter' Liverpool's 'Clubland' ... once again popular music is doing the miracle of rejuvenating and regenerating the city centre of Liverpool!



Arty neighbourhoods at Le Panier and other districts of Marseilles.

Less developed is, for the time being, the nightlife economy of the old quarter of Le Panier in Marseilles, probably because this is still considered a dangerous area by night but also because the noise and agitation would be a disturbance to the inhabitants of the houses in this district (this is an important contrast to the area around Duke Street in Liverpool, which is a non-dwelling district of warehouses). Artists started to move into Le Panier during the 1980s, because the neighbourhood was outmigrating and the rents were extremely cheap: some painters like Guy Ibañez, François Mezzapelle or Gérard Fabre, from the Association Lorette, have been in the area for twenty years. But arts presence in the area started to grow and become noticeable only after the opening of the Vieille Charité cultural complex. Consequently, in the 1990s the art scene in Marseille has been torn in two halves: South of the Cannebiere Boulevard, in the well-to-do district, have remained professional art dealers, like the Galerie Roger Pailhas or the Galerie Athanor and the historic hub of well-established galleries (Veer, 1994), whilst the less favoured North districts and the Panier in particular have experienced a booming of fringe art flourishing in alternative places. Alas, the botanical terminology describes too well this phenomenon because of the ephemeral life of many such initiatives which did not last long. But as soon as one closes down many others are emerging, most of them run by artists doubling as amateur dealers, and the thriving art trade in the Panier is now actively supported and well-publicised.

However in Marseilles, hometown of Pagnol and other national glories of the French theatrical tradition, the leadership in arts-led revitalisation of derelict buildings has historically been galvanised by avant-garde theatre companies -a bit like pop music gigs in the case of Liverpool. The epitome of this kind of intervention has been the establishment of Théâtre National de la Criée Aux Poissons in the old port's fish-market, constructed in 1909. This cast-iron structure had become redundant in 1976 and a new national theatre was inaugurated there on the 22nd May, 1981, under the lead of the famous actor and director, Marcel Maréchal. Just a few blocks down the portfront, at number 16 quai de Rive-Neuve, in a courtyard of warehouses, Anne-Marie and Frédéric Ortiz created the 'Passage des Arts' with the establishment there, since 1983, of two theatres Théâtre Off and Badaboum. The site soon became a true Passage of Arts, fully deserving that name, because the association Arts Parallèles runs an art gallery there and the painter Jean Triolet has also moved in, installing his own studio and a reprographic business. A similar venture has also come to life in the area of the port de la Joliette, where,

since 1985, the Compagnie Théâtre Provisoire has used a former silo and mill as the Théâtre de la Minoterie: two theatre-rooms of capacities of two hundred and one hundred respectively, a bar, and a specialised library which also doubles as an art exhibitions gallery. During the last two decades, countless other buildings, including religious edifices have been converted into theatres in Marseilles. A milestone in this story was reached in 1990, when Alain Fourneau, from the Théâtre des Bernardines, and Philippe Foulquié from Massalia Théâtre de Marionnettes, with the backing of Christian Poitevin, then Head of Cultural Affairs of Marseilles City Council, founded Système Friche Théâtre, a structure of interdisciplinary vocation, the first location of which was a grain silo in the suburban boulevard Magallon. But the following year, with help from the Municipality, the Direction Régionale d'Art Contemporain (DRAC) and the Ministère de la Culture, the team moved into the so-called Friche Bel-de-Mai.

This immense site of 40 000 m², a former tobacco factory in the Belle-de-Mai quarter, a central working-class city district, allowed a capacity of one-hundred seats making the Massalia the biggest permanent marionettes theatre in France, but apart from this attraction other venues came to the Friche de la Belle-de-Mai in 1993: e.g. the Association des Musiques Innovatrices, led by Ferdinand Richard, and ten studios for visual artists administered by the Association Astérides. Then, in 1994, some music studios -Euphonia-, as well as workshops for photography and video creation -Aye Aye Production-, a gig hall for up to 700 people, a nouvelle cuisine restaurant, a bistro, and various mass-communication ventures catering for the young and alternative multicultural audiences of the great metropolitan area of Marseilles: radio Grenouille, and the newspapers/magazines Taktik, Tk2 and Régie Bleue.



Small art galleries and dealers open near the Vielle Charité

The Friche Belle-de-Mai is perhaps a very special case of public funds pouring generously into a grass-roots artist-led initiative, but regardless of the amount invested there, it has to be seen within the context of political practices in France, where cultural policies are not reluctant to taxpayer money being spent supporting artists and encouraging art production⁷. The political upheavals in France have brought some changes in arts spending, but not a significant change in cultural policies - in Marseilles the main promoter of the reuse of redundant buildings by artists remains the City Council. Firstly because a number of artists, chosen by established application procedures, can benefit from a free lease of about twenty-three months of a modern studio in one of the converted buildings administered by the Ateliers d'Artistes de la Ville de Marseille, a new municipal service created in 1990. Its headquarters are based in a former textile factory in the Lorette district (there is a space for exhibitions on the ground floor, usually featuring works by the tenants above). The other main site they own is a former furniture workshop in the central Panier quarter, where two other buildings are now in refurbishment and will soon become artists' houses as well. Secondly, the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Marseilles City Council has, in the last decade, run an ambitious programme of art commissions, some of which have consisted of artistic interventions on derelict sites. Third, the Office de la Culture, a semi-independent organ financed by the City Council, seeks the co-ordination of public patronage of the arts in Marseille, giving special attention to art developments in derelict or less-favoured city areas. Thus, in contrast to the usual situation in Liverpool, it is rare to find in Marseilles inner-city slums artists' associations which have not sometimes benefited from public money usually matching funds from the Ville de Marseille Council, the Conseil Général of the province, the Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, and the Ministry of Culture. This is generally the case of almost any organisation aiming at converting buildings into artists' studios: the list is inexhaustible. For example five visual artists, headed by Sylvie Reyno, who installed

themselves in the former Pâtes-Bonhomme factory of La Calade. Or the exhibition/studio space created by Mary Pupet and Louis-Daniel Jouve, in a former silo not far from the port hangars -in the distressed 15th city district. Or again the ex-priory of Le Canet, a nearby modest working-class area, transformed into artists' studios and an art-exhibitions centre in 1995 by the association Hors-Là. Or also the old Public Baths of the rue de la Palud, refurbished for public art in 1992 by the group Avanti Rapido -later on by the association New Baz'Art. The same as other former Public Baths, the Grands Bains Douches de la Plaine, which have been converted into studios by François Bazzoli and the other members of the association Art-Cade in 1993.

But perhaps the most remarkable case is the association Lézard-Plastic-Production: they had started in 1989 at the former slaughter houses of the chemin de la Madrague, and in September 1995 opened new headquarters in the city centre, converting a forlorn furniture warehouse near the port into an exhibition and performance space: the Centre international d' Arts Visuels Cargo.

Thus, tax-payer money is not the only source of support for provision of artists' studios in Marseilles and to the private initiative of business-minded artists, we can add the contribution of corporate patronage, which often comes forth with synergetic partnerships with artists. Some companies see the presence of artists on their premises as an enhancement and revaluation of their property. This is the case of the Port Autonome de Marseille, the company in charge of Marseilles' port infrastructures, which often holds art exhibitions along the main pier and every Summer it hosts some of the events of the Fête des Suds festival in one of its hangars (besides, sculptor Harmut Bosbach has been graciously granted the use of a redundant hangar as his studio). Another local example is the Societé SARI-SEERI, administrator of the Docks de la Joliette, where every year a new block of these typically Victorian warehouses has been restored and converted into offices. Before the new spaces are offered for sale however, the company temporarily offers some parts for artists' studios and/or art exhibitions -this works well as publicity bait, because on the occasions of 'private view' and 'exhibition inauguration' parties the development company rallies a social gathering of wealthy socialites who might be potential clients of the art-works... and the property's future development as offices! Truly enough, these business-led initiatives are no arts charity:

clever property developers are now very aware of the glamorous appeal of artists studios and thriving alternative life as an attraction for customers. I have already pointed out this while discussing the contribution to the regeneration of Liverpool led by private initiative business lie Urban Splash, the entrepreneurs for The Arts-Palace and Concert Square -and promoters of the conversion of number of Victorian warehouses in Manchester city centre into alternative shopping complexes, loft living apartments, spaces for independent theatre groups and other young cultural venues and art galleries. Thus, ironically, artists and the arts have become a kind of bait both in Liverpool and Marseilles: an attractive packaging for mega-projects aiming at the renewal of entire derelict districts for sale/hire as mixed-use estates in the housing market. Actually, in the publicity campaigns of urban renewal operations launched either by city planning authorities or by real estate agencies, one often finds catch phrases boasting about the involvement of the arts sector in the area to be developed. This is a modern phenomenon which now fascinates some urban historians (Ghildardi Santacatterina, 1995: p.14; cf. also Landry & Bianchini, 1995: p. 26 and 47).

General conclusions. A new approach to the 'knock-on' effect.

Adding to other examples examined by specialists in policies of arts' led urban boosting (cf. Bianchini, 1993; Landry & Greene, 1995; Langsted, 1990; Remesar, 1997), what the two study-cases analysed above demonstrate, is that the level of success of urban regeneration policies cannot be adequately measured in solely physical terms⁸. So much so that it is very debatable whether a boom of new building-developments always constitutes a success: from my point of view this is not the case when real estate pressure scratches out the 'spirit of the place', transforming historic ports into a jungle of office-buildings, commercial stores and hotels, like in the London Docklands, New York's Battery Park City, the harbourfront of Toronto, or the port of Tokyo. Urban developers should be encouraged to introduce more and more public spaces in their projects. Many European cities like Antwerp, Brest or Genoa have learned from the celebrated examples of the ports of Boston and Baltimore that in the case of port cities some of

the more appropriate urban renewal developments are maritime museums, aquariums and leisure waterfronts (Baudoin & Collin, 1992). They help urban sightseers get some personal approach to a seaside experience and they create jobs for which unemployed local workers qualify very well: they are enthusiastic interpreters of maritime displays, they have first hand knowledge of many aquatic species, and they are the most proficient in the manoeuvring and maintenance of boats. Thus historic preservation of port waterfronts can go beyond merely keeping some old buildings, rescuing the neighbourhood too; saving not only the buildings, but also their utility and the morale of the people.



Frank Gehry's building in Bilbao

Now Liverpool and Marseilles have shown that art galleries are also a very successful investment, for they can become catalysts of further urban regeneration when an 'arts district' emerges closeby (Lorente, 1995). Obviously this is not a medicine suitable for every city with problems of urban decay, because not every place has the artistic background and the cultural glamour of Liverpool and Marseilles. But there are plenty of declining ports in Europe whose pedigree as artistic metropolises qualifies them for a similar cure expecting the same results. It is surely no coincidence if some of the most successful examples of the 'Cultural Capital of Europe' festival, like Glasgow (1990), Antwerp (1993) and Lisbon (1994) have produced arts-led rehabilitation of decayed waterfronts. The same happened in the old ports of Barcelona and Genoa, two historic art-capitals again, whose renewal started following the occasion of the Olympic games and the Columbus celebrations in 1992 and it is now well-advanced, with brand new aquariums and new museums about to open. To this list we could add the old artistic sea-side colony of St. Ives in Cornwall, which is hosting a new section of the Tate Gallery since 1993, the Greek city of Thessalonica, cultural hub of Macedonia, whose port-quays feature since 1994 a Museum of Byzantine Arts, and the docks of Bilbao, capital of the Basque arts avantgarde, where a branch of the Guggenheim Museum has open in 1997. I have surely forgotten some relevant examples, but these are more than enough to illustrate my argument. Museums in general and art galleries in particular are not a panacea able to heal ailing ports everywhere; but in the presence of professionals of the arts world they can work as catalysts of urban regeneration of port-cities in decline. In this respect cultural politics in Liverpool and Marseilles are succeeding where more celebrated cases like London and Dublin have failed. This is mainly due to the hurried urban renewal of the docklands areas in these and other capitals which is led -and ultimately undermined- by real estate interests dictated by speculation in the local housing-market. Contrariwise, the scarceness of land speculators investing in the 'industrial heritage' buildings of Liverpool and Marseilles, due to the hard economic crisis affecting both cities, has given an exceptional chance to their re-use for the arts.

The first conclusion I would draw from the above is that, in order to accelerate such knock-on reaction, urban developers should be encouraged in some cases to assure the presence of art professionals. It is good to create multipurpose public spaces, mixed-use centres with shops, offices and different kinds of leisure provision, including museums and galleries. It is even better to provide lodgings or, if urban planning regulations do not allow it, working spaces for artists. This gives the area some life after business hours, and attracts a nocturnal dolce vita. The whole Albert Dock complex is terribly dark and hollow after 6:00 p.m., when the shops and museums are closed; even the restaurants and pubs are shut by then. Would this be so if, as

initially intended, the MDC had provided artists' studios on the top floor? Not very dissimilar is the case of Marseilles' Vieille Charité, where, according to the original plans, some artists should regularly have studios, but this has not really occurred. Yet there is still some hope that these studios might one day be delivered, because both places have kept the spaces previewed for these projects unused. Their managers have not completely ruled them out, but they need perhaps a little more social encouragement to regain interest in art provision: I hope this paper will be a useful contribution to it.

Another conclusion to be drawn from Marseilles and Liverpool is the existence of a second pattern of arts-led urban renewal processes, diametrically opposed to the general scheme taken for granted regarding the development of art-districts in the inner-cities. Examples like Montmartre and Montparnasse in the Paris of the Belle Époque, the SoHo district in New York between 1971 and 1981 or the Temple Bar area of Dublin in the 1980s, have led to the assumption that art districts come into existence in deprived neighbourhoods following this typical format. Firstly some non-established artists discover the existence of cheap atelier-spaces to rent in derelict unused buildings (the Bateau-Lavoir in Paris, the Victorian storehouses of downtown Manhattan, etc). Then art-dealers follow suit installing their galleries in the area while other private entrepreneurs come with alternative/youth amenities like fashion shops, trendy bars, restaurants, dancings, etc. Eventually, there is the arrival there of museums, national theatres and public arts centres marks of the 'officialisation' of such arts districts. The fatal culmination of this is the installation of apartments for yuppies, while artists have to move out little by little, because the rents have become too high in that district.

The typical story of this general cliché can therefore be described as a gentrification process: redundant buildings with stagnating rents in a deprived city area get resuscitated thanks to the presence of artists, this attracts developers who transform the district into an 'arts quarter', which brings in a lot of people, institutions, and money but, eventually, will inevitably expel the artists, because they cannot afford the growing rents. I am not intending to refute that scheme or even to contradict its final output -namely that the arts are victims of their own success and act as instruments of a gentrification process. But I believe that another scheme is also possible, where museums arrive first as a consequence of a political decision to bring derelict landmarks of city heritage into new life, then in a knock-on domino-effect other derelict buildings in the district become cultural centres or art galleries, and finally also artists move their studios in creating a lively atmosphere in what used to be a no-go area. Such has been the process, as we have seen, in the cases of Liverpool and Marseilles. One could thus conclude that arts-led urban regeneration is not always a spontaneous process originated by 'bohemians' and finally benefiting speculators dealing in the housing-market. In some cases the process can start following the political decision to open a museum in a derelict area.

This is of great interest in the realm of contemporary politics towards sustainable cities. Nevertheless, the spirit of independence and revolt inherent in the personality of artists makes them, in general, undomesticated citizens, more often eager to confront urban developers than to collaborate with them. Proof of this is the fact that artists and artists' organisations often have headed urban revolts. In America, the most notorious case took place two decades ago when passionate campaigns for the preservation of New York's SoHo occurred through public demonstrations, political lobbying and anarchist hostility to the law. There are also some well-known European cases. In Berlin, during the riots of 1981, artists and young students featured prominently in the world media as the squatters who radically opposed their eviction from the district of Kreuzberg (Colquhoun, 1995: p. 128). Great criticism as well, by both artists and scholars, has met the renewal of the Temple Bar quarter in Dublin, which has lost its artistic soul and is now a trendy commercial district where most of the new housing is apartments for singles. Many other famous examples could be quoted, not all finishing with happy endings. Such was the case in London, where recently, artists led the local communities in protests unsuccessfully opposing the transformation of the Docklands into a jungle of offices towers (Bird, 1993). On these matters, the natural place where art activism belongs is with grassroots movements and communities, not with developers (Kelly, 1984; Felshin, 1995). On the other hand, it is quite comprehensible if artists are often diffident and critical towards property developers and urban planners. Nobody would like to be used and abused as an attraction for

other tenants, whose presence might eventually outnumber and undermine the initial high concentration of creative people.

Thus, regardless of the order followed in the process, there is a risk that the end might be the same for artists in Liverpool and Marseilles as in New York's SoHo, Paris' Latin Quarter, Montmartre, Montparnasse and Marais, London's Chelsea, Covent Garden, St. Katharine's Dock and Butlers Wharf, or Dublin's Temple Bar. Everytime I visit Liverpool and Marseilles, I get mixed feelings of joy and concern when I see the bistros, ragtrade and nightlife increasing around Duke Street/Seel Street and in the narrow hilly lanes of the Panier quarter. I do not want to sound like a raging Jesus chasing the merchants from the temple, but it would be a pity if these districts lose their soul. The solution to the problem might come from a new spirit of collaboration between the arts communities and the public powers, so that instead of just helping creative people to convert buildings (if at all), grants are also directed at helping artists' co-ops to get affordable mortgages so that they can buy the buildings they have refurbished as studios and galleries.

Finally, it also would be very helpful if all the players involved adopted a more realistic and compromising approach regarding the funding of arts and urban regeneration. In an ideal world, the arts budget of a local, regional or national government should be used for nurturing the arts, whilst the budgets for city planning and urban renewal should be invested in housing and urban betterment schemes. Yet in times of hardship and cuts in arts expenditure, I see no harm in blurring these artificial limits, fostering synergetic collaborations between artists and urban planners. It is sometimes discouraging to do research on the arts scene and be permanently confronted with the bitter accusations of artists, always complaining that too much money is expended in consultants, curators, mediators..., even if the fact is that the grant sponsoring the research in question is not squandering funds from the arts budget. But if artists need to give up their plaintive stance, city planners should also show a more co-operative attitude towards creative people. It is sad to see that the most ambitious projects for inner-city urban renewal now being implemented in Liverpool -'Liverpool City Challenge'- and Marseilles 'Euromediterranée'- both financed with very generous European, national and local funding, and both steered by interdisciplinary teams of smartly clothed specialists, have had no position to offer for downdressed artists to have their say. These agencies are doing an admirable job in restoring the old hearts of the two cities to their former splendour, providing decent housing to some of the most deprived citizens who were cramped in derelict unhealthy houses. But it seems ludicrous that none of the two agencies has plans to co-operate and give support to the lively arts scene, which has always been the historic harbinger of the urban regeneration of Liverpool and Marseilles.

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NOTES

¹ Or, in the absence of real factories, new houses imitating the buildings of old factories might be erected from scratch! E.g. the edifice built in Marseilles in the 1980s by Dr. Rau, a German art-collector -which houses since 1994 the MAC-Galleries Contemporaines des Musées de Marseille.

² This cross-European network supported by the European Union and backed by the Council of Europe was born in March 1983, during a weekend festival of seminars, exhibitions, films, and performances celebrating the recuperation of several derelict buildings by independent cultural centres. This festival, entitled 'Les aventuriers de l'arche retrouvée' was organised by the Halles de Schaerbeek (Brussels), inviting similar centres from seven European cities. That was the start of more than thirty similar meetings elsewhere in the following ten years, in which time new associates joined from all around Europe. However, as any association, Trans Europe Halles has also experienced, with time, some withdrawals. There is, as a result, also a list of ex-members: Ny Scen (Göteborg), Huset (Copenhagen), Albany Empire (London), Transformadors (Barcelona).

³ But in their success also lays a great danger. If artists and art communities become successful redevelopers, they can be tempted to resign from their initial vocation and pursue a new career as urban developers. In Britain this has been a notorious phenomenon during the urban boom of the 1980s, when so many business-minded artists left the tools of their craft, realising that their ability to discover and revitalise derelict buildings could earn them more money, more quickly (Seligman, 1986; Lawson, 1988). At another level, this is still the case of some very successful London organisations, such as 'SPACE Art Services', 'ACME', the 'Limehouse Foundation' or other similar ventures for studio provision in converted buildings (Williams, 1993; Jones, 1995): they are doing a fine job both in regenerating abandoned buildings and in ensuring some regular income to the artists employed in their management. But it can sometimes be embarrassing when visiting these artists organisations if one asks the managers about their latest art creations, because in many cases their bureaucratic job has completely taken over and they are not any more practising artists. An old solution for this problem is to establish a rota: in Paris in the 1830s a group of five painters -Trimolet, Steinheil, Meissonier, Daubigny, and Dechaumes- tried such a deal, forming a sort of co-operative, agreeing that each in turn would work at his art for a year at the expense of the others (Pelles, 1963: p. 30 and 166, footnote 21). However, in my opinion the best solution would be that urban developers came forward producing affordable artists' studios instead of systematically 'office-ificating' ex-industrial buildings. A paradigmatic case, combining galleries, studios, apartments, cafes and dancing spaces, is Birmingham's Custard Factory Quarter, opened in 1994 by a London-based businessman on the former premises of Birds, once a world leader Victorian firm in custard production (Cox et al., 1995).

⁴ I only know two cases out of France, the Halles de Schaerbeek in Brussels and the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh.

⁵ I find particularly interesting this double comparison of Liverpool/Manchester with Marseille/Lyon; but of course the most natural points of comparison in previous studies have been other port-cities in general. Cf. for example the counterpoint Marseille-Montreal (Gasquy-Resch, 1991), the proceedings of two colloquia held in Marseille (V.V.A.A., 1989), Merseyside (Judd & Parkinson, 1990), and Le Havre (Marks, 1993 & Dufay, 1993 from the book edited by Cantal Dupart & Chaline), the special issue of the *Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* on «Grandes Villes et Ports de Mer» (septembre 1992), etc.

⁶ Presenting this as a success of urban regeneration might seem debatable, but in previous experiences the municipality of Marseilles has encountered social hostility to other kind of cultural policies for urban regeneration. When they commissioned 'L'aventure', a public art work from Richard Baquié, the famous conceptual artist, to be placed in Quartier Nord Malpassé, a disadvantaged suburb, they found a resentful response from the local communities who tagged and vandalised that expensive art commission, whose money they thought could have been better spent in more useful ways (C. Ayard, 1988). When the city opened a national theatre for contemporary plays in the depressed Northern district of Merlan, it found few customers in the neighbourhood, while people from richer areas were afraid to use their cars to go there or would have difficulties in finding a taxi-driver prepared to do so by night -and not for nothing are theatre-performances called 'soirées'.

⁷ The Direction des Arts Plastiques of the Culture Ministry regularly bestows a considerable part of its budget on promoting new artists' studios, co-financing repair works undertaken by artists in their studios (up to 50% of the total expenditure) and subsidising urban developers who built artists' studios (between 80,000 and 100,000 FF. for every studio). As Catherine Millet has pointed out, the contemporary arts-scene in France has evolved from slumming anti-establishment art communities to associations of tenants working in subsidised sites (Millet, 1994: p. 280). Happily enough, this growing concern to reintegrate artists back into the heart of our cities seems to be pervading beyond political or social divides (for specialised literature on studio provision cf. Lansmark, 1981; Lipske, 1988; Keens, 1989; Lawless, 1990; Kartes, 1993; Williams, 1993; Colin, 1994).

⁸ A similar conclusion arises, from another perspective, in other studies on urban renewal through the arts (Cf. especially Bianchini et al 1988; Bianchini, 1991; as well as Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993).