



The Arts of Place: Creativity and Regeneration in the New Economy Conference Summary



Programme Overview

Overall Aim

The overall aim of The Arts of Place: City Park project is to facilitate Bradford Council's cultural aspirations for City Park – a landmark centre regeneration project. This programme is funded by Arts Council England, Yorkshire - Grants for the Arts, and Bradford Council.

The Arts of Place & Beam

The Arts of Place is an innovative multi-disciplinary approach to place-making that combines the arts, learning and public engagement, and places the arts and artists at the centre of regeneration. Beam helps people make better places through learning and education, the promotion of good design and the imaginative use of the arts in the public realm. See www.artsofplace.org.uk/bradford-news

Conference Overview

Thursday 7 October 2010

National Media Museum, Pictureville, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD11NQ

The environment in which many regeneration projects are established is vastly different today - the rules have changed and the ground has shifted in the face of huge pressure on both public and private sectors. This conference explored how we can ensure that culture and creativity are embedded in future projects.

42 delegates attended the conference all of whom were from the region, with Council representatives from Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds and North East Lincolnshire. Others attended from different organisations including: Working parts Ltd, IOU, Mind the Gap, Kala Sangam, Spacesuit Arts, Orangedot and Freedom Studios amongst others. This conference attracted delegates from a range of professions and a range of levels including: project managers, directors, events managers, regeneration, culture, freelance creatives, producers, education, planners etc.

Together the delegates and speakers examined how integrating culture and creativity can provide value for money and increase sustainability, and consider practical ways forward.



City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk





Conference Aims

- Explore the environmental, economic and social impact of integrating culture and creativity with regeneration
- Raise understanding about the key drivers in regeneration in the context of a Recession
- Explore the impact of engaging communities through culture and creativity
- Raise awareness about cultural regeneration in Bradford and specifically the City Park development
- Provide an opportunity to learn about and from the *Arts of Place* programme
- Provide a range of practical and inspirational solutions and ideas

Topics & Speakers

Overview of regeneration Bradford and the role that culture and creativity has played

Barra MacRuairi, Strategic Director Department of Regeneration, Bradford Council

Barra Mac Ruairi started the day by inspiring conference delegates and stating that “Regeneration is about building us”, he questioned how and if the cultural industry addresses acute requirements such as homelessness etc. Barra commented that “there is great potential in Bradford that doesn’t exist in other cities” and that 350 employees from the Council are participating in the Bradford Academy shared skills programme. A short film was played showcasing City Park Ambassadors.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80GfWqITDI0>

The Arts of Place: City Park, Bradford

Robert Powell, Executive Director, Beam

Robert Powell provided an overview of The Arts of Place, City Park programme and introduced the artists’ temporary commissions. A short film was played showcasing the artists’ work.

<http://www.slideshare.net/BeamOrangery/1-robert-powell-arts-of-place-conference>

http://www.youtube.com/user/BradforDsCityPark#p/a/u/0/_s-c5uDQYjo

The Ground has Shifted

David Rudlin, Director Urbanism Environment and Design (URBED)

David Rudlin talked about a tale of 4 recessions starting in 1970 when a number of space exchanges took place to generate activity. David stated that creativity can grow out of recession and quoted derelict sites that had been taken over for creative uses in the past that are still thriving today “regeneration doesn’t have to be about big projects”. David went on to discuss the 1980 recession and talked about Manchester when again creativity led to successful developments “you have to have dips in order for development to occur”.

In 1990 in Bradford David was involved in a Little Germany action project, which generated activity including a Bradford festival and Buskers festival, which changed people’s perceptions and impressions of the area. Now in 2010 David talked about Stoke Upon Trent and The Spode site where he is involved in a project to generate activity levels with the potential for a circus, football pitches and free buildings for artists. Can you “Grow your own urban?”

<http://www.slideshare.net/BeamOrangery/2-david-rudlin-arts-of-place-conference>



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Now Things are Different – We Have to do Things Differently - *The Challenges Facing Public Art*

Maggie Bolt, Director Maggie Bolt Associates & Founder of Publicartonline



Maggie began her talk by stating “There has never been a better time to reconnect with the homemade ,local and non-retail pleasures, and that there can be added value in doing things differently.

Maggie talked about the need to question current practice and broaden our skill set “Can we claim the ‘Big Society’ for ourselves?”

Maggie stated that without culture we have no society and that we should all be pushing for solutions to problems that face us all in terms of sustainability and focusing on solution based arts practice. In the culture of Costa Rica ‘Pura Vida’ means peaceful life – a life which is about community, culture and simplicity, and according to the Happy planet index Costa Rica is the happiest place in the world. Maggie questioned who makes the rules and that if we can shake off some of the shackles that our risk averse society has created – we can start to make places which allow people and particularly children to be more actively engaged and freer in – ‘Free range kids’ as Wayne Hemingway calls. Maggie stated that artists are visual engineers and should be involved at the beginning of projects and concluded by asking “Why wait for permission? Why don’t we just do it?”

<http://www.slideshare.net/BeamOrangery/bradford-talk>

Big Art and the Big Society - *relations and transformations in urban space*
Laurie Peake, Programme Director (Public Art) – Liverpool Biennial

Laurie discussed the Big Art project with reference to St Helens and that it was the determination of the Local Authority & the Community that resulted in a successful transformation.

Laurie stated that the community is the commissioner and the generator. Laurie talked about Bootle Boating, which was part of the programme of residencies and commissions that ran throughout 2009 on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in South Sefton and North Liverpool. Laurie also mentioned ‘Shanghai on the Mersey’ which is a major development by Peel Holdings on the historic northern docks that she is hoping to develop capacity building projects in the neighbourhoods that are behind the development in order to better equip those communities to benefit from it when it comes on stream over the next 20 years.

<http://www.slideshare.net/BeamOrangery/laurie-peake-arts-of-place-conference>

‘Meanwhile’ in Bradford – an overview of Fabric’s temporary use of land and buildings

Gideon Seymour, Director, Fabric

Gideon talked about Bradford Urban Garden and how by developing a scheme and then showing the developer this convinced them to make a joint commitment and determination. Gideon also discussed how the Meanwhile Project was an organic process which also included Pop Up which is a temporary gallery in an empty shop unit.

<http://www.slideshare.net/BeamOrangery/gideon-seymour-arts-of-place-conference>

Dragonz Den Workshop

David Rudling introduced ‘The Channel’ as a case study to delegates who were then tasked to generate ideas in multi-disciplinary groups that would create a positive and temporary contribution that aims to raise the profile of The Channel and increase the use and life of the site. Delegates had to then present their ideas *Dragonz Den* style.



Blue Group

The blue group developed the concept of ‘HobbyVille’ to counteract the consumer world. Hobby organisations take ownership of the buildings near the industrial park to encourage gatherings, there would be an adventure playground, opportunity to learn new skills, drive by Cafes to generate economy. The space would be vibrant & creative with potential sponsorship from B&Q.

Orange Group

The orange group proposed ‘Mozzarella Gardens’ to bring the rural element of Bradford into the city. Narrow boats would be customised by local residents. There would be a farm with water buffalo to feed the city.

Green Group

The green group offered a 5% stake for £200K investment. They offered a permanent solution for young people (university). An open air 3D cinema would be open everyday of the week. There would be a basketball court and every Sunday beach volley ball. The space could host concerts, markets, open mic nights and giant Wii Play in open air. Potential for additional sponsorship.

Red Group

Return investment within 5 years. In order to raise the profile of the area the red group proposed a series of activities leading to a festival. The aim was to grow BUG outwards through temporary events, grow food for cooking events, encourage cycling, temporary rivers and water sculptures. Important to get the community



involved in the process to create a vibrant space that shifts and changes. Estimate cost over 5 years - £3 million

All the groups were successful in receiving investment from the Dragons.

Integrating Creativity and Regeneration from an International Perspective *John Newling, International Artist*



The final speaker of the day was international artist John Newling who was truly inspirational. John opened by stating “If you really want to do something you can do it”. John also mentioned that with every project the first people John speaks to is the newspapers to gain their support. John collaborates with experts in other areas.

John is interested in situationalists that walk through a city or place without purpose. John warned to be careful of words that are being spun at the moment.

John talked about one of his recent project where he asked people what made them feel better, if you can drink, walk, listen, play and eat in a city it will be a happy one. John then linked these to places and objects that make people feel better. He has now mixed these up to create 50 new situations that he will start undertaking shortly – such as “Make a piano in Spain”.

Artists make very significant things and these need to be disseminated. Detroit is re-inventing itself as a farm. The Lemon tree & me - its our duty to understand more.

Real regeneration is a shift in how we perceive where we live. John will utilise the earth that delegates collected to plant his miracle tree and will send images of miracle tree when it grows.

<http://www.john-newling.com/>





Feedback & Evaluation

100% of delegates feedback indicated that they felt they had gained knowledge about integrating culture and creativity with regeneration, in the context of a recession. 37% felt they had learnt some new things, 50% learnt a bit more with 12% stating they had learnt a lot more about the impact of engaging people in regeneration through culture and creativity. One delegate commented that there were “Very interesting examples from the speakers”.

All feedback indicated that delegates learnt more about cultural regeneration in Bradford and The Arts of Place Programme in City Park. The majority of delegates felt that the conference provided them with the opportunity to contribute and share practical and inspirational ideas with a range of professionals.

We received positive feedback about all the speakers, some comments include John Newling’s “enthusiasm and artistic practice were fascinating” and “David Rudlin – Very innovative”.

Delegates were asked what key things they would take away from the conference – responses included: “A greater understanding of the sector at this moment in time and some new contacts”, “Maggie Bolt’s points about doing things differently” and “To get activity into areas that are not being used to help start the process of regeneration”.

Over 80% of delegates rated the event as good or very good.

Additional comments included a note that the conference was more regional than national and that the workshop session could have been improved.

Summary

To conclude, the content and quality of the conference was of a high standard and the professionals speaking were informative and inspirational. This event provided an opportunity to promote Bradford, The City Park and The Arts of Place programme and also supported the launch of the artworks. Speaker presentations and key web links were circulated after the event and all delegates were invited to join a LinkedIn group.

