

RENKEI 2013: Urban Sustainability and Resilience

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Resilience and Collaboration

- Globalised, connected and uncertain world
- Requires diverse forms of expertise and knowledges
- Emphasis on cross-cutting relationships and collaborations
- Proliferation of spaces and subjects to broker these new relationships

Creativity

- Creative industries, creative economy, creative city
- Tied to knowledge economy and future prosperity
- Political project to nurture creativity
- Plethora of strategies and programmes
- A history of limited collaboration and tokenistic consultation
- Yet recent signs of more collaborative approaches with novel spaces and subjects emerging as a result

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...the sandbox...underpins how we run REACT...it's all about generosity and working fast, and being very self-critical and reflexive, making decisions rapidly with intuition. Skills you relate more with the creative economy or arts, rather than academia...

...there's a reason the AHRC are setting up hubs to do this, there's a reason we are being compelled to find economic value in arts and humanities research. That speaks more broadly to the project in higher education about value for money and so on, and neoliberalisation more broadly.

I think if a university tried to do a REACT, a top-down version, it wouldn't work. Instead they enable you, trust you, give you the space to do what you want, even if it is difficult for them to recognise or understand your work.

The role represents a distinctive set of talents needed in the field of creative innovation, and Knowledge Exchange... They operate in multiple ways, acting as boundary spanners between sectors, project managers and advisors to support funded projects, relationship brokers within the REACT network and creative practitioners in their own right. These roles address many of the needs for 'brokers' in KE projects while at the same time providing a new set of skills specific to the creative and arts sector.

(Moreton and Dovey 2013, p. 13-14)

See No Evil



See No Evil

- A Bristol street-art and urban music festival
- Top-down arts-led regeneration? More complicated.
- Empowering a diverse range of actors – not just the ‘usual suspects’
- The council is operating at a distance
- Important brokering role to perform the ‘joining-up’ labour



I was probably a unique character in the council because there are a lot of nine to fivers – I've never been a nine-to-fiver...we spent a lot of time at the Central Cafe and the Chill Bar...all these different networks around the city and linking those up was really fun...

We all came with different skills and that's the key thing. You need those different people to make something happen. They work in very different ways to the way the city [council] works and you got to be in the middle to try and balance it out.

You do need to know how to talk to all those different people - you need to have rapport with people. So being that link person – it's giving them a helping hand and not being bossy, just being helpful and then being helpful the other way. Just a lot of turning around and then getting shouted at a lot!

...I think I got too consumed by the whole project... but if I hadn't been so consumed I don't think it would have happened...I want it again even though I know how much hurt and awfulness it caused me. I still want to pull off another See No Evil - just not See No Evil - another big project like that. So I think it's an addiction – a good drug...?

Conclusion

- Uncertainty and resilience
- Diversification of expertise and proliferation of collaborations
- Spaces and subjects brokering these new relationships
- New opportunity for spaces such as Hamilton House
- New opportunity for academics