The Art of Regeneration: the establishment and development of the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, 1985–2010

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by

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Abstract

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This thesis is about change. It is about the way that art organisations have increasingly been used in the regeneration of the physical environment and the rejuvenation of local communities, and the impact that this has had on contemporary society. This historical analysis of the development of a young art organisation, the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), which has previously not been studied in depth, provides an original contribution to knowledge with regard to art and culture, and more specifically the development of media and community art practices, in Britain.

The nature of FACT's development is assessed in the context of the political, socio-economic and cultural environment of its host city, Liverpool, and the organisation is placed within broader discourses on art practice, cultural policy, and regeneration. The questions that are addressed – of local responsibility, government funding and institutionalisation – are essential to an understanding of the role that publicly funded organisations play within the institutional framework of society, without which the analysis of the influence of the state on our cultural identity cannot be achieved.

The research was conducted through the triangulation of qualitative research methods including participant observation, in-depth interviews and original archival research, and the findings have been used to build upon the foundations of the historical analysis and critical examination of existing literature in the fields of regeneration and culture, art and media, and museum theory and practice.

This research concludes that FACT, in its establishment and development, has been heavily influenced by the unique local conditions of Liverpool, and by wider national policy, and it asserts that the organisation's growth was aided by its location in a city that was in receipt of increasing levels of financial support after the social unrest of the early-1980s, throughout New Labour's policies of 'social inclusion,' and following the award of European Capital of Culture status in 2003. Intrinsically linked to these funding opportunities was the process of institutionalisation that FACT has undergone, and the rebranding of the organisation in 1997 and opening of the FACT Centre in 2003 are cited as the main reasons for the redefinition of the organisation's aims and objectives.

These claims are supported by the interrogation of the Video Positive festivals, the Collaboration Programme and the Moving Image Touring and Exhibitions Service, sub-brands which comprised FACT's core offer prior to the opening of the FACT Centre. The changes that have taken place within each of these projects is identified as symptomatic of the power of national funding and government policy, the changing technological environment and the production and consumption of art.

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List of Acronyms

ACE	Arts Council (of) England
ACGB	Arts Council of Great Britain
AFVC	Artists' Film and Video Committee
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AND	Abandon Normal Devices
Ars	Ars Electronica
ASL	Austin-Smith:Lord
BFI	British Film Institute
CDA	Collaborative Doctoral Award
DCA	Dundee Contemporary Arts
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ECoC	European Capital of Culture
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
FACT	Foundation for Art and Creative Technology
FVB	Film, Video and Broadcasting department
FVU	Film and Video Umbrella
HAT	Housing Action Trust
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRTG	High-Rise Tenants Group
ICA	Institute of Contemporary Arts
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ISEA	International Symposium for the Electronic Arts
ITEM	Institute for Technical Exhibition Management
LARC	Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium

LFMC	London Filmmakers Co-operative
LHAT	Liverpool Housing Action Trust
LVA	London Video Arts
MDC	Merseyside Development Corporation
MICE	Moving Image Centre for Exhibition
MIDA	Moving Image Development Agency
MITES	Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service
Nesta	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
NIVF	National Independent Video Festival
NMGM	National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
NML	National Museums Liverpool
RAB	Regional Arts Board
RFO	Regularly Funded Organisation
SMAC	Small and Medium Arts Collective
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
yBa	young British artists
ZKM	Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie

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Introduction

Introduction

The individual arrives in a world in process, the product of untold centuries of development. Institutions that are the results of complex historic forces determine the situation.[1]

Situating the Research

The period 1985–2010 was one of considerable change across Britain. It began and ended with the Conservative Party in government, although since May 2010 government has been formed in coalition with the Liberal Democrats. Similarly, the period began and ended with the country in recession, although the economic downturns flanked years of considerable growth. For Britain's cities, the economic conditions created uncertainty, and in urban areas the associated social problems that arose from high levels of unemployment and poverty were magnified. In the early 1980s, some inner-city areas were sites of rioting and social unrest, but during the following decade of improving economic conditions, there was increased investment in Britain's cities to tackle these problems. Regeneration, and its integration into wider policy areas, was used to improve living conditions and create jobs, and it was targeted in urban areas to encourage greater levels of tourism to reinvigorate local economies.

One policy area that was increasingly integrated into regeneration schemes was culture. This approach developed in the late 1980s and, following the European City of Culture year in Glasgow in 1990,[2] the approach was widely adopted in Britain and across Europe. The integration of culture into regeneration policy was cemented after the election of the Labour government in 1997, which saw the introduction of an integrated policy approach, and culture was positioned within this through the newly created Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). As part of this new approach to policy-making, cultural institutions became central to the government's 'social inclusion' agenda and, having

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[1] Handlin, O. (1979), *Truth in History,* Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p.276
[2] European City of Culture was renamed European Capital of Culture in 1999

undergone a process of transformation of their functions, their role in society changed significantly.

The changing functions of museums and galleries reflected wider changes to arts practice, which had seen shifts in production since the late 1960s. Following the increased availability of media technologies and their wider impact on society, through new modes of communication due to the Internet, art practice had seen the increasing infiltration of media, and as the twentieth century came to a conclusion, media artworks began to enter the gallery. The consumerist values that accompanied the economic boom of the late 1990s, together with the increasingly rapid rate of technological development, also placed the technologies of media art into British homes. This changed the way audiences consume the arts, and cultural institutions responded by integrating media into their infrastructure, and from this emerged a new institutional model, the media centre. The combination of these factors – urban regeneration utilising culture, technological innovations within art practice, and the changing role of museums – led to the emergence of a number of art organisations which supported and promoted media art, and in Liverpool, a city with unique political and socio-economic conditions, Merseyside Moviola was established in 1985. As an art agency that combined the increasing interest in technology and growth in media art production with community arts practice, Merseyside Moviola, latterly named the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT),[3] responded to societal changes and provided a range of exhibitions and services which had their own impact on the society from which they had developed.

Research Questions

To date, the history of FACT has been written with varying degrees of accuracy in both formal publications and internal documentation. Whilst underpinned by three themes – the city as a place of continual change; media as a turning point in art practice; and the changing role of art institutions in society - this thesis aims to produce a history of the first

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[3] The names Merseyside Moviola, Moviola and FACT are relevant to specific time periods: 1985-1989 Merseyside Moviola; 1989-1997 Moviola; 1997-present FACT. For consistency, when referring to the organisation in broader terms in this thesis, it will be under its current name of FACT.

twenty-five years of FACT, 1985–2010, by setting its decision-making and activities into the political and cultural conditions of the time, and it will use this historicisation to illuminate the processes of change that have taken place across Britain. These conditions span the urban environment and socio-economic history of Liverpool, the historical development of technology and media within art, and the institutional framework of Britain's cultural sector. In order to assess the changes to society, the research will address the following questions:

1. To what extent, and in what ways, has FACT's development mirrored that of the city of Liverpool?

2. How has the transformation from agency to institution impacted on FACT and its artistic, community and media programmes?

3. To what extent has FACT contributed to Liverpool's cultural profile, and in what ways has it impacted on the regeneration of the city?

4. Can an arts organisation with international aspirations maintain relevance to its local community, and what impact does public funding have on this objective?

5. What relationship is there between the development of FACT and changing arts practice and policy in Britain?

Methodology

To answer these research questions, a number of methods will be employed, the selection of which has been dictated by the structure of the research model and the nature of the enquiry. This project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and is the first of three interlinked studies on FACT.[4] Although the projects are intended to complement each other, they are independent and fall under the remit of the ARHC's Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) scheme. According to the AHRC, CDAs were designed to "encourage and develop collaboration and partnerships between Higher Education Institution (HEI) departments and non-academic organisations and businesses,"[5] or non-HEIs. This scheme signals a commitment from the AHRC to the better integration of the research undertaken by universities and the work of public bodies, and it led to the author's

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[4] The overarching title of this AHRC CDA rolling programme is 'New media in a digital age: the role of new media in art, culture and society at the turn of the 21st century'
[5] Arts and Humanities Research Council (2012), *Collaborative Doctoral Awards* (Online)

involvement in the planning and delivery of an academic conference, 'Rewire: the fourth Media Art Histories conference on the histories of media art, science and technology,' which was hosted by FACT in September 2011.[6] The author was initially involved as an academic consultant, but as the project coincided with a period of serious funding cuts and financial uncertainty within the arts, the time subsumed by planning the conference impacted on that which was available for research.

This turn of events was exacerbated by a lack of clarity within the CDA programme, and whilst the AHRC's application guidelines stipulate that "the student will be spending time working with the organisation…in activities which are an integral component of the research to be presented,"[7] they do not prescribe how this can be determined. Furthermore, they do not account for the fundamental divergence of the objectives of HEIs and non-HEIs, and although the CDA scheme is still relatively new,[8] the difficulties outlined here highlight the inconsistent definition of key terminology that is employed in both academic and arts practice, and which is used by necessity throughout this thesis. Of importance to the methodology is the definition of the term *collaboration*, a word with contradictory linguistic origins, which the Oxford English Dictionary lists as meaning both united co-operation, especially in artistic work, and "traitorous co-operation with an enemy."[9] The latter definition dates back to the Second World War (1939-1945), and although the meanings of words naturally evolve over time, in the context of collaborative practice within a research project, this dichotomy usefully illustrates that collaboration, ideally "the act (or process) of 'shared creation' or discovery,"[10] can have shortcomings when uniting disparate partners.

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[6] The *Rewire* conference was a three-day international conference on the histories of media art, science and technology. The fourth in a series of biennial conferences which began in Banff, Canada in 2005, it was hosted by FACT at Liverpool John Moores University. For more information on the Media Art History group, and the Re: conference series, see Media Art History (2011), *Homepage* (Online)

[7] Arts and Humanities Research Council (2012), *Collaborative Doctoral Awards* (Online)

[8] The first CDAs were launched by the AHRC in 2004, commencing October 2005 (ibid.)

[9] Oxford English Dictionary (1989a), *Collaboration, n.* (Online)

[10] Hargrove, R.A. (1998), *Mastering the Art of Creative Collaboration,* New York: McGraw-Hill, p.4

Nevertheless, this thesis builds upon the unique access to varied resources afforded by working in collaboration with an ongoing organisation to provide a historical analysis of the establishment and development of FACT, and in so doing, it adopts a qualitative approach to data collection.   The historical analysis is used to enable the author to assess the successes and failings of the organisation throughout the twenty-five year period examined, with *success* being measured in two ways. In the case of the individual projects studied in Part 2, success is interpreted as the achievement of the aims outlined by FACT when the projects were launched, alongside an analysis of positive responses that can be perceived in media coverage and through indicators such as audience figures. In Part 3, the measurement of success cannot be achieved in this manner due to the absence of explicit aims for projects that had implications for wider society and, therefore, the author's own criteria of assessment, based on personal experience and perception, alongside further study of media coverage and public funding, has been used as the primary means of analysis.

Analysing FACT's historical development in this manner raises issues of subjectivity, a criticism that is often levelled at qualitative research methods. As indicated above, research methods all have limitations, but the issue of subjectivity transcends each one employed here, and whilst efforts have been made to maintain critical distance from the research subject, this thesis is underpinned by E.H. Carr's assertion that the historian must accept "the impossibility of total objectivity."[11] In light of this, it is important to note that having been raised in Merseyside, the author has had a close acquaintance with Liverpool throughout the period being studied and, consequently, brought some preconceived ideas about the city to the research process. However, based upon the belief that "important truth is esoteric and is due to revelation from special authorities,"[12] three different research methods have been utilised to ensure that a broad view of the research area has been obtained, thus providing robust and balanced findings.

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[11] Carr, E.H. (1961; 2001), *What is History?* Basingstoke: Palgrave, p.117

[12] Margalit, A. (2002), *The Ethics of Memory,* Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press, p.176

Participant Observation

The collaborative nature of this research, whilst at times problematic, provided unique access to a functioning organisation and this relationship suggested a methodology that was particularly useful during the first six months of the project. Participant observation is primarily an anthropological methodology, and it requires the study of, in this case, the day-to-day operations of an arts organisation to illuminate practice in the field as well as identifying the decision-making processes employed by FACT. It is suited to "complex fields of activity with numerous situations and persons"[13] because it unites people with a range skills and experience, and enlightens both the researcher and the subjects of research to the research process.[14]

> The world of everyday life is for the methodology of participant observation the ordinary, usual, typical, routine, or natural environment of human existence. This world stands in contrast to environments created and manipulated by researchers, as illustrated by experiments and surveys.[15]

As such, although the research presented in this thesis far transcends the contemporary daily workings of FACT, it was important to understand the existing institutional context in order to analyse its historical development. Representing FACT on their cross-institutional organising committee for the Rewire conference placed the author within FACT's organisational framework, and enabled submersion in its working practices.

The methods involved in participant observation throughout the research ranged from casual conversations with colleagues to attending meetings, and whilst some of these exchanges were recorded in writing, it is important to note that the method was not often conducted as consciously as its definition might suggest. Taking an organic, *ad hoc* approach was more suited to the environment at FACT, but also to the qualitative nature of the research,[16] although it did necessitate adherence to the rules of participant observation

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[13] Friedrichs, J. and Lüdtke, H. (1975), *Participant Observation: Theory and Practice,* Farnborough and Lexington, Mass: Saxon House and Lexington Books, p.85

[14] Fox, N.J. (2003), "Practice-based Evidence: Towards Collaborative and Transgressive Research," *Sociology,* vol.37, no.1, pp.81-102 (p.88)

[15] Jorgensen, D.L. (1989), *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies,* London: SAGE, p.15

[16] Punch, K.F. (2005), *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches,* London: SAGE, p.179

to ensure that the process was conducted efficiently, and that the results were valuable. Tim May, in one of many guides to social research,[17] outlines six indices that are essential for the smooth implementation of participant observation: time; place; social circumstances; language; intimacy; and social consensus.[18] Many of these criteria, such as *social circumstances*, were met serendipitously, with many of FACT's staff being young university graduates, and due to the collaborative nature of the project, the author had a *place* within the organisation and *time* to acquire *intimacy* with its practices and *language*. However, the last of May's indices, *social consensus*, is perhaps the most difficult to measure, but he defines it as "the extent to which the observer is able to indicate how the meanings within the culture are employed and shared among people,"[19] and this was achieved by the level of access that was afforded across the organisation, with other methods used to verify or disprove any observations.[20]

Becoming part of the consensus, however, is not without risk, and aside from being "the most personally demanding and analytically difficult method of social research,"[21] participant observation significantly jeopardises the possibility of objectivity as the researcher becomes part of the system being studied.[22] With such time and effort being invested into participant observation, the researcher can struggle to maintain sufficient distance from their research subjects, who become colleagues and, indeed, friends. A greater knowledge of the organisation affects the way that research decisions are made, and inclusion in the organisation's working practices can lead to, in anthropological terms, 'going native.'[23] In this instance, it refers to becoming sympathetic to the research subjects, a dedicated staff doing the best they can within significant bureaucratic and financial restraints, although it must also be noted that working on a specific project can lead to the researcher being subsumed by the inevitable frustrations of any employment situation.

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[17] May 1997. See also Rugg and Petre 2007; Punch 2005; Gilbert 2001a; Silverman 2000; McNeill and Chapman 1985; 2005

[18] May, T. (1997), *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process,* Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.145-146

[19] ibid., p.146

[20] See Gillham 2005

[21] May (1997), *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, p.138

[22] Friedrichs and Lüdtke (1995), *Participant Observation: Theory and Practice*, p.84

[23] Punch (2005), *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p.183

Interviews

As a historical research project with a timeframe dating back less than thirty years, the findings of participant observation were supplemented with the oral testimony of FACT's main protagonists, many of whom are still working in the arts. Although there are a relatively small number of people involved in FACT's history, it was not possible or plausible to interview each of them and, therefore, a process of selection was undertaken which was shaped by accessibility and willingness, alongside a criteria of prioritisation based upon seniority. As such, founders, directors, project leaders and curators throughout FACT's history were interviewed, and these were contextualised by interviews with members of FACT's Board, leaders of Liverpool's cultural community, and representatives from local and national funding bodies. Primarily an "exploratory technique"[24] through which to shape the direction of the research project, the interviews were conversational in style, and whilst many were recorded and transcribed by the author, the nature of the discussion, which included personal information of people still working within the arts sector, has ethical implications that means the transcripts are not available in an appendix to this thesis.

As stated above, interviews were used to illuminate the motives behind FACT's development, and although focusing on 'elite'[25] decision-makers overlooks the audience, arguably the most important aspect of any arts organisation, the lack of prior historical interrogation of the organisation governed this decision. Unstructured interviews were utilised to enable conversational exchanges between the interviewer and interviewee, and whilst they required a basic framework of topics to be drawn up in advance, responses from the interviewee were allowed to determine the course of the interview. Whilst enabling access to "people's perceptions, meanings [and] definitions of situations,"[26] unstructured interviews can lead to long and unwieldy interview transcripts or, conversely, a struggle to sustain the discussion,[27] and the development of a good rapport from the point of initial contact is crucial. Furthermore, the differences between each interview leaves the technique open to significant criticism, particularly as the quality of data can depend on the "unique relationship established between the interviewer and

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[24] Gillham, B. (2005), *Research Interviewing*, Maidenhead and New York: Open University Press, p.53
[25] ibid., p.54
[26] Punch (2005), *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, p.168
[27] Gillham (2005), *Research Interviewing*, p.53

interviewee."[28]   However, this is one of the realities of conducting research in any organisation that has been shaped by the people within it, and interviews were used to corroborate or disprove observations made through the other research methods employed.

Reliance on memories from people who were intimately involved in FACT's history poses further problems, however, and it is important to note that interviews are an artificial environment for a dialogue, thus exposing the findings to the risk of 'interview effect.'[29] This sees the interviewer and the interviewee constructing their own role within the discussion, roles which can then be misinterpreted when the data is analysed.[30] Furthermore, interviewees play a gate-keeping role in the level of knowledge they wish to impart, and whilst they are essential to the construction of *truth*, even if it is esoteric and personally defined, reliance on an individual's recollection of events as part of FACT's 'shared memory,' some as distant as thirty years ago, is complicated.[31]   Consequently, as the organisation's unwritten history is "located between...two poles: history and myth,"[32] all memories must be treated as fallible, with the passage of time and egoism affecting the testimony.   However, just as personal involvement can enhance the strength of the memory, motives for mythologising FACT's history and benign lapses of memory must be accepted as an inevitable side-effect of interviewing.   That researchers can maintain a degree of detachment not afforded an interviewee[33] can compensate for this, as can the use of wider documentary study and other complementary methods.

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[28] McNeill, P. and Chapman, S. (1985; 2005), *Research Methods,* London and New York: Routledge, p.59
[29] Gillham (2005), *Research Interviewing*, p.6
[30] McNeill and Chapman (1985; 2005), *Research Methods*, p.59
[31] Margalit (2002), *The Ethics of Memory*, p.51
[32] ibid., p.63
[33] Gillham (2005), *Research Interviewing*, p.7

Historical Archival Research

In addition to using interviews as a means of accessing personal memories, archives have been used extensively in this research, and FACT's archives have been understood to be "'memory institutions' with a common mission of preserving and providing access to evidence of past actions and decisions."[34]   As such, they are much theorised by philosophers, historians and archivists, with a notable discussion being provided by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Here, he argues that an archive does not "accumulate endlessly" but is, instead, consciously composed, grouped and maintained in accordance with specific rules.[35]

> The archive of a society, a culture, or a civilisation cannot be described exhaustively…It emerges in fragments, regions, and levels, more fully, no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separate us from it: at most, were it not for the rarity of the documents, the greater chronological distance would be necessary to analyse it.[36]

Consequently, an archive, as with interviews, always provides an incomplete picture and, therefore, "nothing can be taken for granted" regarding the motives for the collection, or verity, of the information.[37]

Muller et al, in their *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1940), state that:

> An archival collection is the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official.[38]

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[34] Hedstrom, M. (2010), "Archives and Collective Memory: More than a Metaphor, Less than an Analogy" in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. T. Eastwood and H. MacNeill, Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp.163-179 (p.163)

[35] Foucault, M. (1969; 2002), *Archaeology of Knowledge*, London and New York: Routledge, pp.145-146

[36] ibid., pp.146-147

[37] Macdonald, K. (2001), "Using Documents" in *Researching Social Life*, ed. N. Gilbert, London: SAGE, pp.194-210 (p.208)

[38] Muller, S. et al (1940; 1968; 2003), *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives,* Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, p.13

As an incomplete series of documents that has been consciously collected, FACT's archive is inherently institutionalised and comprises information that was considered to be important enough, or was legally required, to be preserved.[39] It is, however, largely uncatalogued and, therefore, has no single cohesive narrative, being stored disparately, both in terms of location and media. It exists online[40] and in storage as paper documents, video tapes, and other recordings, and is, at the time of writing in 2012, spread across three separate locations in vaguely chronological or thematic sections. The paper archive is barely organised, and this lack of order reflects the organisation it documents, and whilst the online archive is more coherent, having been developed as a consequence of a funding grant, it was left unfinished once the funding came to an end.

In this somewhat disorganised format, FACT's archive resembles the sort of *collection* outlined by Muller et al, and whilst it has not undergone many of the formalising processes they introduce, it can, and does, play an important role in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the organisation.[41] However, archives create a skewed impression of the events they document, not least because they are rarely collected intentionally, or even consciously,[42] and they are frequently subjected to "excessive hoarding…for us and for posterity."[43] The nature of this hoarding is difficult to ascertain, and it is important to note that FACT does not appear to have had an archiving policy throughout its history, although the planning documentation for individual exhibitions is relatively comprehensive. The archival records of the broader organisational issues are somewhat more haphazard, and whilst business plans and Board meeting minutes before 2007 are present, some are inconsistently detailed or have volumes missing. Furthermore, whilst media coverage and marketing is well represented, its longer term projects, such as the Collaborations

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[39] McKemmish, S. et al (eds.) (2005), *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies, p.23

[40] FACT (2008), *FACT Online Archive* (Online)

[41] Eastwood, T. (2010), "A Contested Realm: The Nature of Archives and the Orientation of Archival Science" in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. T. Eastwood and H. MacNeill, Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp.3-21 (p.11)

[42] Burton, A. (2005), "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories" in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. A. Burton, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, pp.1-24 (p.3)

[43] Lowenthal, D. (2007), "Archives, Heritage, and History" in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, eds. F.X. Blouin Jr. and W.G. Rosenberg, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp.193-206 (p.195)

Programme and Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES), are less detailed. There are no internal memos present in the archive, and minutes of meetings below Board level are almost entirely absent.

The lack of detail and chronological inconsistency does not denigrate the usefulness of the material that is present in the archive, however, but it does place even greater importance on using other research methods to corroborate any claims or assumptions. Archive material alone cannot paint an accurate picture of decision-making or the everyday interactions that determine the course of an organisation, and former government minister Richard Crossman's comments to historian A.J.P Taylor, that "I've discovered, having read all the Cabinet papers about the meetings I attended, that the documents often bear virtually no relation to what actually happened,"[44] serves as a useful reminder that historical sources cannot be relied upon as evidence of *fact*. Furthermore, this exchange between Crossman and Taylor reveals a great deal about the complexities of writing history, and whilst a wide array of data may be available in almost limitless forms, that which is absent cannot, of course, be interpreted. As Hargrove states:

> History is not just made up of facts and events but is largely based on interpretations. We choose our interpretation of what happens to us based on our beliefs and assumptions, which are often arbitrary.[45]

This is not to suggest that historical analysis is always premeditated and preconceived, but creating a history through the methods outlined above, and especially being part of the process oneself, enhances the socially constructed nature of both the organisation and the research. Consequently, "the historian…must immerse himself in a whole world of knowledge, within which boundaries are not precise and the configurations of which change constantly"[46] and, therefore, the triangulation of the research methods outlined above rests alongside a broad interrogation of existing literature to enable a more accurate, and useful, understanding of the past.

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[44] Cited in Thompson (2000), *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, p.61
[45] Hargrove (1998), *Mastering the Art of Creative Collaboration*, p.9
[46] Handlin (1979), *Truth in History*, p.257

A Brief History of FACT

Merseyside Moviola was established in 1985 by Josie Barnard and Lisa Haskel. They had both moved to Liverpool the previous year as students, Barnard to study Russian and Soviet Literature and Haskel to study Psychology, and the two young women shared a flat in the Toxteth area of the city. Neither came from an arts background, but Barnard developed an interest in alternative film and video after taking a film studies module under John Thompson at the University of Liverpool.[47] By 1985 Haskel had left university and was working as a music events promoter, and through her connections with Liverpool's alternative music scene and Barnard's academic interest in alternative film, they identified a gap in the city's cultural offer. Liverpool did not have an established arthouse cinema, nor did its cultural organisations regularly showcase media artworks and, therefore, they established Merseyside Moviola as an occasional screening agency.[48] Merseyside Moviola was funded by small grants received from Merseyside Arts, and whilst remaining revenue was raised by ticket sales, the organisation did not generate any profit and relied upon loans of equipment from local companies, including Granada TV which had a studio in Liverpool at the time. Their first event, *The Urban Programme*, was a diverse two-day screening which was held at the Unity Theatre, 9–10 November 1985, and included documentaries, scratch video and a Charlie Chaplin film, and throughout 1986 and 1987 they hosted further film screenings at both the Unity Theatre and Everyman Theatre with increasing frequency.

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[47] John Thompson worked at the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Liverpool from 1974-1991 and, according to Barnard, taught a varied film studies course which ranged from "a serious analysis of 'Ghostbusters' one week [to] an exploration of the jokes in [Russian filmmaker] Tarkovsky the next." (Barnard, J. (founder, Merseyside Moviola), email message to author, 20 February 2010)

[48] Biographical and historical detail is taken from interviews with Josie Barnard, Lisa Haskel and Eddie Berg (Barnard, email message to author, 20 February 2010; Berg, E. (Artistic Director, BFI Southbank, former Director, FACT), interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010; Haskel, L. (founder, Merseyside Moviola), interviewed by the author, 21 January 2010)
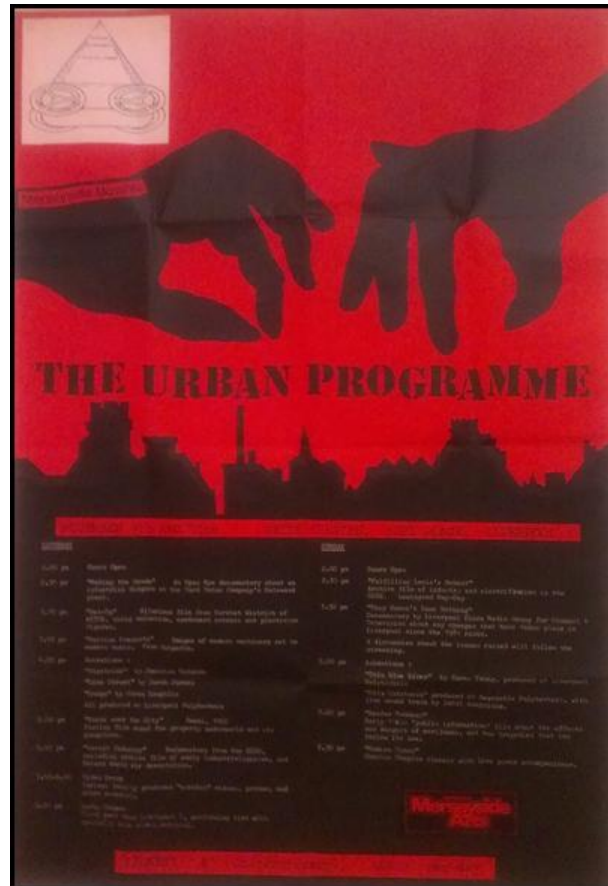
Fig. 1 Poster for Merseyside Moviola's inaugural event, *The Urban Programme*, 1985

Through their events at the Everyman, Barnard and Haskel met Eddie Berg, a young Liverpool resident, or 'Scouser,' working in a front-of-house position at the theatre. Berg had taken an Open University course called Popular Culture, through which he met Sean Cubitt, a leading academic of media art, and following this course he became increasingly interested in the work that was promoted by Merseyside Moviola. Having become more involved with the project, the combination of Barnard, Haskel and Berg's skills and interests facilitated the development of a series of workshops and further screenings across Merseyside, until Barnard and Haskel left Liverpool in 1987, although the latter remained involved with Merseyside Moviola on an occasional basis throughout the early 1990s. Berg's involvement in Merseyside Moviola was formalised in 1988 when he became the organisation's first paid member of staff, and in subsequent accounts of the organisation's history, this year has frequently been cited as the year of foundation.[49] However, although

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[49] In 2009, FACT published *We Are the Real-Time Experiment* to celebrate the organisation's twentieth year, thus implying that it was founded in 1989. In other sources, the year of foundation has more frequently been cited as 1988. See FACT 2009; Berg 2003e; *FACT Centre: History and*

securing funding for Berg's salary was a significant turning point in Merseyside Moviola's history, the organisation that developed from 1988 onwards grew directly from the work done by Barnard and Haskel.

Berg's vision for the organisation was much more ambitious than that of Barnard and Haskel, however, and in 1988 he chose to drop the regional prefix in an attempt to signal an international profile, and his early achievements with Moviola demonstrated this ambition. He secured funding from the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) for a biennial festival of video art, with the first Video Positive festival taking place in 1989. From the outset Video Positive was defined as an international festival, but Moviola was underpinned by an ethos of being rooted in the local community which it had inherited from Merseyside Moviola. This was demonstrated in the early 1990s, a time which was crucial in the development of Moviola's core activities, when the organisation secured funding for a community project that would be integrated into the Video Positive festivals. The Collaboration Programme was established in 1990, and two years later Moviola's remit further developed with the creation of a media art presentation and training facility, MITES. Both of these activities were supported by the ACGB and Merseyside's Regional Art Board (RAB), and by 1995 Moviola had asserted its position as a regularly funded client.[50] This status signalled a period of continual growth for Moviola throughout the 1990s, which culminated in the rebranding of the organisation in 1997. The new brand, the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), produced two further Video Positive festivals in 1997 and 2000, as well as continuing to develop the Collaboration Programme and MITES, but by the turn of the twenty-first century, the organisation had become increasingly focused on the development and construction of its own premises, the FACT Centre.[51]

Context (The Green Book), (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *Moviola Business Plan 1992-1995*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1)

[50] Arts Council of England (1996), *The Arts Council of England Annual Report 1995/96*, Arts Council of England: London, pp.85-86

[51] Originally called the FACT Centre, the building that houses FACT is known both internally and locally simply as FACT, but to avoid confusion, the organisation will be referred to as FACT and the building as the FACT Centre.

The period between 1997 and 2003 signified the greatest reinvention in the organisation's history and it provided FACT with the opportunity to unify its activities. However, a further significant change took place when, in early 2005, Director Eddie Berg and Associate Director Clive Gillman, who had joined FACT on a temporary basis in 1990 and worked specifically on MITES and the FACT Centre development, both left Liverpool for posts as Artistic Director at BFI Southbank, London and Director at Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) respectively. Their departures revealed how integral to FACT's identity their individual personalities had been and, consequently, the organisation entered a period of transition, both in terms of its direction and as it settled into its new building. Berg was replaced in April 2005 by Gillian Henderson, formerly at the London Film and Video Development Agency, who remained in the post for eighteen months and after a period without a Director, video artist and media art curator, Mike Stubbs, was appointed in May 2007. Stubbs had established Hull Time-Based Arts in the mid-1980s, a video arts agency with similarities to the early Moviola, and had most recently been employed as Head of Exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Moving Image in Melbourne, and it was under his guidance that FACT reasserted itself as "the UK's leading media arts centre."[52]

Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised in three parts, covering respectively the context of the research; FACT's main components, or sub-brands; and FACT's identity and wider impact. Part 1 provides the context in terms of culture, history and method, within which Chapter 1.1 reviews the existing literature on three broad themes that underpin the study: the city as a place of continual change; media as a turning point in art practice; and the changing role of art institutions in society. Culture is shown to have played an important role in the regeneration of cities, and art and its institutions are depicted as integral to cultural identities. The integration of media technologies within art practice are shown to be central to shifts in definitions of art, and the origins of media art are traced to film and photography. The chapter concludes with an analysis of museums and galleries, focusing on their role in society and debates on participation, with the concept of institutionalisation also analysed.

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[52] FACT (2012a), *About* (Online)

Chapter 1.2 provides the historical and cultural context for the study, and opens with an economic profile of Liverpool, set against the wider social and political conditions of Britain during the 1980s. Regeneration is identified as a key policy area, with culture's role within it further examined. Media art is shown to be an important part of Britain's cultural history, and beginning with the Fluxus movement, media art practices, and its funding, are depicted as increasingly influential. This is shown by the changing role of art institutions in society, with the model of the media centre used to illustrate this. The chapter concludes by presenting the historical context of Liverpool's art institutions.

Part 2 focuses on the three main sub-brands of FACT's offer – Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme, and MITES – with a chapter on each. In Chapter 2.1, Video Positive is set in the wider context of arts and cultural festivals, and it is shown to have been facilitated by cross-city collaboration, through partnerships with, for example, Tate Liverpool and renowned media artists and curators. This chapter includes an assessment of the aims of the Video Positive, and evaluates the success of the festivals in light of their international objectives, significant scale of growth and lack of longevity. It is shown that Video Positive provided a precedent for similar festivals of contemporary art, both in Liverpool and across Britain, and encouraged the network of collaboration between cultural institutions that remains in Liverpool today.

Chapter 2.2 examines the Collaboration Programme, a sub-brand that emerged directly from Video Positive. The project is set in the context of community arts practice in Liverpool, with organisations like the Blackie (now the Black-E) and Tate Liverpool having conducted community and participative projects throughout their own histories. The chapter then focuses on one project within the Collaboration Programme, namely *tenantspin*. This is the longest running of FACT's individual projects, having initially launched in partnership with the Liverpool Housing Action Trust (LHAT) and the residents of Liverpool's tower block communities. The limitations of the Collaboration Programme are explored, with its absence from the gallery and traditional art historical debates being identified as a significant problem in its own history.

Chapter 2.3 looks at the Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES), placing this sub-brand into the context of difficulties in exhibiting media artworks, as highlighted by Video Positive. This context has roots in the modernist white cube gallery format, and the emergence of the black box gallery model is introduced here. Funding and policy are central to the debate surrounding media art, and the ACGB's *Very Spaghetti* (1991) report is interpreted as a turning point in the history of media art presentation in Britain. MITES was developed in response to this report, and its aims are interrogated here, with its development into a near-monopoly in the support of artists and art galleries utilising media technology identified as integral to its role in demystifying media art.

In Part 3, the thesis broadens its gaze to situate FACT in the contemporary context of Liverpool, Britain and Europe. Chapter 3.1 analyses the concept of branding, and interrogates the renaming of Moviola as FACT. The new brand led to the definition of new aims for the organisation, and these are explored in the context of changes in national policy triggered by the General Election victory of New Labour in 1997. The ideology and policies of the new government, including the 'Cool Britannia' phenomenon and the launch of the DCMS, placed museums within the government's 'social inclusion' agenda, with FACT playing an important role. However, rebranding imposed a process of institutionalisation on FACT, and the implications of this are discussed here.

Chapter 3.2 further investigates the notion of institutionalisation by focusing on the development and construction of the FACT Centre in Liverpool's Ropewalks area. Following a discussion of cultural quarters in general, and those in Liverpool in particular, the history of the area is outlined, and the role of the FACT Centre as a flagship development within the wider context of regeneration in Liverpool, is explained. The process of developing the FACT Centre, from the initial plans for the Moving Image Centre for Exhibition (MICE) to its existing format, is situated within the context of the emerging model of media centres in Britain and Europe. As such, the relationship between the FACT Centre and other organisations, especially the Ars Electronica Centre in Linz, Austria, is explained, and the funding implications of the project are examined. The relationship with City Screen, the

cinema operator that shares the FACT Centre, is also explored, before providing an overall assessment of the successes and failures of the project.

Chapter 3.3 explores the role of the FACT Centre in the regeneration of Liverpool, a process that intensified after the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2008 award was announced in 2003. Regeneration is framed within the context of debates on gentrification, with the Liverpool One shopping centre development, which happened in conjunction with ECoC, illustrating this process. Liverpool's bid for ECoC was heavily influenced by the experience of Glasgow's ECoC year in 1990, which placed regeneration at the heart of its cultural celebration.   This chapter examines Liverpool's bid for ECoC status, including the organisation that produced the bid, and FACT's role within this is explained, looking particularly at Video Positive as an important precedent for the cultural networks that conducted the ECoC programme, and the role of the FACT Centre. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the cultural legacy of ECoC in Liverpool.

The final, concluding, chapter of the thesis returns to the research questions outlined above. It summarises the main findings and offer answers to these questions. It considers the contribution made by this research to our understanding of the relationship between culture, regeneration and media, and offers some suggestions for how an in-depth study of a single institution, and its development within a particular city, can be a useful lens for helping to understand the cultural industries both in that city and across Britain.

Fig. 2 Timeline of key events

Contemporary Context

Events in FACTs History

Contemporary Context		FACTs History
Walker Art Gallery opens	**1873**	
First Venice Biennale	**1895**	
Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*	**1917**	
Wall Street Crash leads to Great Depression	**1929**	
First Venice Film Festival	**1932**	
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall burns down	1933	
Rebuilt Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall opens	1939	
Arts Council of Great Britain replaces Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts	**1946**	
Festival of Britain	**1951**	
Coronation Court built in Norris Green, Liverpool	**1956**	
First John Moores Painting Prize	1957	
The Beatles release their first album, *Please Please Me*, and have first UK No.1 chart hit	**1963**	
Sony launch PortaPak portable video camera	1965	
London Filmmakers Co-operative established	**1966**	
John Willett's *Art in a City* published	1967	
The Great Georges Street Project, commonly known as the Blackie or Black-E, launches	**1968**	
Cybernetic Serendipity exhibition at ICA, London	**August 1968**	
Artists' Film and Video Committee launches	**1973**	
Filmaktion exhibition at Walker Art Gallery	**June 1973**	
Margaret Thatcher becomes leader of the Conservative Party	**1975**	
Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube* published	1976	
London Video Arts established	**1976**	
Winter of Discontent	1978-1979	
Ars Electronica launches as a biennial event	**1979**	
Margaret Thatcher elected as Prime Minister	**May 1979**	
First Urban Development Corporations established	*1980*	
National Independent Video Festivals held in Bracknell, Berkshire	1981-1988	
Toxteth Riots	**July 1981**	
Michael Heseltine visits Liverpool and drafts a memo entitled *It Took A Riot*	July/August 1981	
Merseyside Development Corporation established	**1981**	
Tate in the North awarded to Liverpool	1981	
Watershed opens in Bristol	**1982**	
Falklands War	April-June 1982	
Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff* on BBC2	**October 1982**	
Phil Redmond's *Brookside* launches on Channel 4	November 1982	
Derek Hatton *de facto* leader of Liverpool City Council	1983-1986	
Film and Video Umbrella established	1983	
Liverpool hosts the International Garden Festival	**1984**	
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside created after Merseyside County Council disbands	1985	
Cornerhouse opens in Manchester	**1985**	

Contemporary Context		FACTs History
	1985	Merseyside Moviola established by Josie Barnard and Lisa Haskel
	November 1985	Merseyside Moviola host their first event, *The Urban Programme*, at the Unity Theatre
Ars Electronica becomes an annual festival	1986	
Arts Council of Great Britain establish the Film, Video and Broadcasting department	**1986**	
Members of the Militant Tendency expelled from the Labour Party	1986	
	1987	Eddie Berg becomes involved in Merseyside Moviola
	1987	Josie Barnard and Lisa Haskel leave Liverpool
Glasgow hosts the National Garden Festival	**1988**	
Tate Liverpool opens at the redeveloped Albert Dock	1988	
	1988	Eddie Berg becomes the first paid employee of Merseyside Moviola
	1988	Moviola secures funding for Video Positive from the Arts Council of Great Britain
The German government supports a centre for art and media in Karlsruhe	**1988**	
Housing Act establishes Housing Action Trusts, including the Liverpool Housing Action Trust	1988	
	1988	Moviola moves into an office at the Bluecoat
Ropewalks designated as a cultural district by Liverpool City Council	**1989**	
Tim Berners-Lee proposes World Wide Web	1989	
	1989	Merseyside Moviola renamed as Moviola
City Screen is established	**1989**	
	February 1989	First Video Positive festival held across Merseyside, including National Videowall Project at Tate Liverpool
Arts Council of Great Britain is divided into ten Regional Arts Boards	*1990*	
Glasgow is the UK's first European City of Culture	1990	
	1990	Moviola becomes registered charity
	1990	Moviola establishes the Collaboration Programme, initially entitled the Community and Education Programme
	Summer 1990	Moviola create the post of Animateur, and appoint video artist Simon Robertshaw
Internet used for the first time	December 1990	
	1991	Eddie Berg first suggests developing a building to house Moviola
	1991	Clive Gillman joins Moviola
	May 1991	Second Video Positive festival held in Liverpool
Very Spaghetti: The Potential of Interactive Multimedia in Art Galleries report is published	1992	
First Visionfest festival launches in Liverpool	1992	
	1992	Moviola establishes the Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service, and launch the 'Spaghetti without Tears' training programme
	July 1992	Louise Forshaw appointed as the second Animateur
Arts Council of Great Britain outline their ten point plan for arts provision in *A Creative Future*	**1993**	
	May 1993	Third Video Positive festival held in Liverpool
Tony Blair becomes leader of the Labour Party and launches New Labour	1994	

Date	Context / Liverpool events	Date	FACT / related events
1994	Arts Council of Great Britain renamed Arts Council of England		
1994	National Lottery established		
		1995	Moviola and the Moving Image Development Agency conduct a feasibility study for the Moving Image Centre for Exhibition in Liverpool
		1995	Moviola becomes one of the Arts Council of England's Regularly Funded Organisations
		May 1995	Fourth Video Positive festival held in Liverpool
1996	New Labour manifesto, *because Britain deserves better,* Is launched		
1996	Ars Electronica Centre opens in Linz, Austria		
		1996	Magnasync / Moviola in the USA threatens Moviola with legal action regarding use of 'Moviola'
1997	Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie opens in Karlsruhe, Germany		
1997	Department for Culture, Media and Sport is established to replace the Department of Heritage		
		1997	Moviola changes its name to the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT)
March 1997	*Vanity Fair* magazine publishes 'Cool Britannia' issue		
		April 1997	Fifth Video Positive festival held across Liverpool and Manchester
May 1997	The Labour Party wins the UK general election		
September 1997	The LUX Centre opens, incorporating London Electronic Arts & London Filmmakers Co-operative		
1998	The Arts Council of England disbands the Film, Video and Broadcasting department and responsibility is transferred to their Visual Arts department		
1998	Superflex open the first *Superchannel* studio in Copenhagen, Denmark		
1998	Merseyside Development Corporation is disbanded		
1998	Ropewalks Partnership launches		
		September 1998	FACT co-host ISEA98 with LJMU & Manchester Met University in Liverpool and Manchester
		December 1998	FACT abandons the multi-occupant Moving Image Centre for Exhibition model in favour of a single-occupant building
1999	Glasgow hosts the City of Architecture and Design		
1999	Dundee Contemporary Arts opens		
		1999	Austin-Smith: Lord appointed as architects for the FACT
		1999	FACT facilitates a collaboration between Superflex and Liverpool Housing Action Trust, establishing the second *Superchannel* in Liverpool
September 1999	First Liverpool Biennial		
2000	Liverpool City Council establishes the Liverpool Culture Company to manage the bid for European Capital of Culture 2008		
		2000	Clive Gillman appointed as Lead Artist on the FACT Centre project
		2000	FACT Centre building work commences at the Crown Foods Factory site, Wood Street, Liverpool
		March-May 2000	Sixth Video Positive festival held in Liverpool
		2001	Alan Dunn appointed as the Project Manager for the *Superchannel* project
		2001	*Superchannel* renamed *tenantspin*
2002	Coronation Court demolished		
		2002	FACT publishes *Supermanual*, a guide to establishing Superchannel projects
2002	Liverpool Culture Company submits its bid for European Capital of Culture 2008		
		Spring 2002	FACT Centre is scheduled to open
		2002	Seventh Video Positive festival scheduled but does not take place
		2003	Arts Council of England's Regional Art Boards subsumed by Arts Council England
		2003	FACT launch the Institute for Technical Exhibition Management
2003	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Year of Learning'		
2003	AV Festival launches in the North East		
		February 2003	FACT leaves office at the Bluecoat
		February 2003	FACT Centre opens to the public
		April 2003	Roof of the FACT Centre collapses
June 2003	Liverpool announced as the European Capital of Culture 2008		
2004	Drummond Bone appointed as Chair of Liverpool Culture Company		
2004	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Faith in One City'		
April 2004	Robyn Archer appointed as Artistic Director for Liverpool 2008		
2005	YouTube launches		
2005	Liverpool City Council commissions the Impacts 08 study into Liverpool 2008		
2005	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Sea Liverpool'		
		2005	Liverpool Housing Action Trust disbanded, and Arena Housing join the *tenantspin* collaboration
		2005	Eddie Berg and Clive Gillman leave FACT
		April 2005	Gillian Henderson appointed as Director of FACT
2006	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Liverpool Performs (Art, Business, Sport)'		
2006	Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium established		
		2006	FACT Centre records its 1 millionth visitor
July 2006	Robyn Archer leaves the post of Artistic Director for Liverpool 2008		
		October 2006	Gillian Henderson leaves FACT
2007	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled '800th Birthday (Year of Heritage)'		
		May 2007	Mike Stubbs appointed as Director of FACT
		August 2007	Re: [Video Positive] exhibition held at the FACT Centre
September 2007	Robyn Archer appointed as Creative Director for Liverpool 2008		
		2008	FACT Centre records its 2 millionth visitor
2008	Liverpool hosts the UK's second European Capital of Culture celebrations		
		February 2008	sk-interfaces exhibition held at FACT as part of Liverpool 2008 celebrations
December 2008	Tate Liverpool hosts The Fifth Floor exhibition		
2009	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Year of the Environment'		
2009	DCMS publishes the *Digital Britain* report		
		September 2009	FACT hosts the first Abandon Normal Devices festival in Liverpool in partnership with Cornerhouse, Manchester and folly, Lancaster
2010	Liverpool City Council's themed year entitled 'Year of Health, Wellbeing and Innovation		
2010	Impacts 08 publishes the *Creating an Impact* report on Liverpool 2008		
2010 -2020	Liverpool City Council launches the 'Decade of Health and Wellbeing' following the perceived success of their themed years		
May 2010	The Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats form a coalition government		
		September 2010	Cornerhouse hosts the second Abandon Normal Devices festival in Manchester in partnership with FACT, Liverpool and folly, Lancaster
February 2011	James Moores' A Foundation closes		
		April-June 2011	Knowledge Lives Everywhere exhibition held at the FACT Centre

1. Context

1.1 Literature Review

Art and society...They are as much of a pair as oil and vinegar or chalk and cheese; like them they owe their association in our minds largely to the fact that they don't mix.[53]

1.1.1 Introduction

This thesis has three overarching themes that will be explored below, all of which pertain to the relationship between art and society. As, fundamentally, the study of an art institution within the context that it has developed, these three themes are the city as a place of continual change; media as a turning point in art practice; and the changing role of art institutions in society. The potential literature that could be explored in pursuit of unpacking these themes is vast and, therefore, what follows is a review of the core texts that will locate this thesis within existing debates. This incorporates literature on urban regeneration and the role of culture within regeneration strategies, the emerging field of media art history and its associated theoretical foundations, and the relationship between institutions and the communities they reside alongside. Some of these themes were explored in John Willett's seminal text, *Art in a City*, published in 1967, a study which has been an important point of departure for this thesis. Willett was a London-based theatre designer and writer, and his book was developed from a report he made to the Bluecoat Society of Arts in Liverpool two years earlier. Written at the peak of Beatlemania, Liverpool was enjoying an influx of artists throughout this period, with low living costs in the city, the prominence of groups like the Liverpool Poets and the recent launch of the John Moores Painting Prize for contemporary art at the Walker Art Gallery.[54]

Willett contextualises this cultural scene by exploring the broader socio-economic conditions of the city, and attempts to create a model for the future development of the city's culture that could be applied in other provincial towns and cities. He identifies art and culture as ever-changing, and intrinsic to any city, although he also suggests that Liverpool is unique.

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[53] Willett, J. (1967; 2007), *Art in a City,* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and the Bluecoat, p.1
[54] For further information, see Section 1.2.5

> Art in a city is not a static affair...Even a museum is likely to be evolving all the time, subtly changing its relationships both with the community that pays for it and with the outside world of art. In other places it might be easy to forget this. The local roots might be too difficult to plot, or at least to distinguish from those in other parts of England; the future might seem like a hazy and haphazard extension of the past, a matter for pure speculation. In Liverpool they are obvious and urgent.[55]

Enthusiastic though he is about Liverpool, he depicts the city as one of contradiction: architecturally impressive yet still bearing the scars of Second World War bombs; lined with elegant Georgian terraces that were degenerating into slums; and brimming with artists but with no single, distinctive artistic style. However, he was emphatic in his view that Liverpool could, and should, capture what made the city unique and, in doing so, capitalise on the complexity and diversity of its communities.

Willett concludes his work by suggesting some twenty recommendations for Liverpool's artistic future, ranging from the issuing of a visual arts news sheet to integrating schools and healthcare into an arts loan scheme.[56] Whilst many of his recommendations have not been introduced, or have only been addressed recently, his overall vision has been widely accepted. He advocates the notion of Liverpool's cultural organisations working together to achieve the following goals:

1. To humanise and beautify the reconstruction of the city;
2. To strengthen its identity, both to its own citizens and to outsiders;
3. To stimulate a distinctive Liverpool art, particularly among the younger generation, and to remove obstacles to visual self-expression;
4. To break down the barriers which isolate art and design as supposed inessentials; and finally
5. To create an exciting atmosphere for persons and institutions concerned with art[57]

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[55] Willett (1967; 2007), *Art in a City*, p.20
[56] ibid., pp.248-249
[57] ibid., p.242

Whilst this plan requires the idea that art and society do not mix to be overturned, Willett's text, republished in 2007, alongside an accompanying edited collection that revisited many of his ideas,[58] has undoubtedly been successful in demonstrating that art institutions can be at the centre of reinvigorating civic pride.

1.1.2 The City

The Changing City

In stating that "art in a city is not a static affair,"[59] Willett makes an important observation about the fluid nature of contemporary cities. Cities are constantly undergoing a process of change; of function and, crucially, of urban fabric. Typically, cities are sites of extreme contradiction, where the wealthy reside alongside the poorest sectors of society and, therefore, those areas of society that require government intervention appear amplified. In recent years, under the guidance of government policy, regeneration has been the catalyst behind many of the changes to contemporary cities, with a significant number of regeneration schemes being introduced in the aftermath of the Second World War. The term *regeneration* has been widely debated in academic circles, and it is best understood as a "fluid, ongoing [and] uneven"[60] process. Evidently, therefore, the fluid nature of cities is reflected in the policies intended to facilitate change, and Peter Roberts supports this by stating that *regeneration* is:

> A means of determining policies and actions designed to improve the condition of urban areas and developing institutional structures to support the preparation of specific proposals.[61]

However, he also states that the activity of regeneration itself is undergoing a process of change, and is, therefore, characterised by its ability to straddle a range of sectors and circumstances.[62]

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[58] See Biggs and Sheldon 2009

[59] ibid., p.20

[60] Gilmore, A. (2004), "Popular Music, Urban Regeneration and Cultural Quarters: The Case of the Rope Walks, Liverpool" in *City of Quarters: Urban Villages in the Contemporary City*, eds. D. Bell and M. Jayne, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.109-130 (p.109)

[61] Roberts, P. (2000), "The Evaluation, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration" in *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*, eds. P. Roberts and H. Sykes, London: SAGE, pp.9-36 (p.22)

[62] ibid.

The government's understanding of this was demonstrated by the publishing of a report by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004, which defined regeneration as "the holistic process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in areas where it has reached a stage when market forces alone will not suffice."[63] In order to be considered 'holistic,' there has to be sophisticated levels of integration across many policy areas, as well as an acceptance that progress can only happen over a long period of time.[64] The government's commitment to regeneration as a tool for tackling social and economic problems has grown over the last thirty years, and Harris and Williams suggest that regeneration has become so entrenched recently that it is almost invisible, with city residents becoming accustomed to the transformation of many of the symbols of a bygone industrial era into multi-functional regeneration zones.[65]

That Harris and Williams, both employed in art history departments, have written about regeneration demonstrates its increased integration into other areas of academic interrogation as well as in government intervention, although some critics state that, despite this, regeneration is too frequently used in an *ad hoc* manner to serve temporary requirements, rather than playing a role in a broader long-term vision.[66] This is compounded by the increasing complexity of cities, and Graeme Evans, a regeneration theorist, suggests that the transformation of our urban environment requires new models of thinking about, and undertaking, regeneration schemes, although he also stresses that the outcome is a "more self-conscious and self-styled recreation of the renaissance city."[67]

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[63] See Glossary (Annex 10), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2004
[64] Smith 2007a
[65] Harris, J. and Williams, R.J. (2011), "Re:'Regenerate': The Art and Architecture of a Mixed Metaphor" in *Regenerating Culture and Society: Architecture, Art and Urban-Style within the Global Politics of City-Branding*, eds. J. Harris and R.J. Williams, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Liverpool, pp.11-28 (p.15)
[66] Couch, C. (2003), *City of Change and Challenge: Urban Planning and Regeneration in Liverpool*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, p.4
[67] Evans, G. (2001), *Cultural Planning: An Urban Renaissance?*, London and New York: Routledge, p.212

Culture and Regeneration

One area of policy that has become increasingly employed alongside regeneration is cultural policy, and Evans has developed a new model of thinking in response to this. Understanding what is meant by *culture*, however, is complex, as the term encompasses a wide range of interests, art practices, social relationships and nationally driven agendas. The range of literature on culture is vast, and although it would be impossible to provide an adequate analysis of the concept here, it is important to outline that whilst the term can be understood in both artistic and anthropological terms,[68] it is used here in line with Raymond Williams' theory that culture is not "a form in which people happen to be living, at some isolated moment, but a selection and organisation, of past and present, necessarily providing for its own kinds of continuity."[69] This overarching definition demands "elasticity" in its application[70] to ensure its relevance to many aspects of life and, consequently, Hewison's statement that "culture puts the flesh on the bones of national identity"[71] is of particular importance.

The application of this notion that culture can be used to add layers to other policy areas, and in this case to regeneration policy, is in line with Evans' new models for regeneration, which describes three potential regeneration strategies: cultural regeneration; culture *and* regeneration; and culture-led regeneration. Cultural regeneration and culture *and* regeneration are examples of the two policies being implemented concurrently, although at varying levels of integration, with the former being the most integrated. Culture-led regeneration more specifically understands the role of culture being as a catalyst, often with flagship arts institutional developments or cultural events at its heart.[72] The two policy areas are not so smoothly integrated, however, and Evans and Foord attribute this to the varying definitions of culture that exist in contemporary society.[73]

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[68] McGuigan, J. (1996), *Culture and the Public Sphere,* London: Routledge, pp.5-6
[69] Williams, R. (1981), *Culture,* London: Fontana, p.184
[70] Hewison, R. (1995), *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics Since 1940,* London: Methuen, p.302
[71] ibid., p.15
[72] See Evans 2005
[73] See Evans and Foord 2003

> Two sets of meanings are particularly prevalent in current urban policy and regeneration discourses. One set of meanings and values suggests culture is an essential element of everyday life and identity...The second interpretation of culture is as an integral and substantive part of present day city economies.[74]

Furthermore, the integration of culture into the economy, although increasingly seen as important, is still in transition. Although regeneration is more than just an economic policy, culture is frequently used as an additional component of regeneration rather than being seen as integral to it, thus demonstrating that the definition of culture as having potential economic value is still not fully accepted. Aside from this economic uncertainty, Evans attributes the lack of integration to the inconsistency of arts funding and the absence of entrenched attitudes of collaboration between those responsible for regeneration or cultural activities.[75] Although he and Foord assert that culture is "an essential element of everyday life and identity,"[76] it still appears to remain somewhat on the periphery of many regeneration strategies.

Melanie K. Smith suggests that this may be because the two concepts remain both vague and complex,[77] exacerbated by the commitment from government often being to the potential income generation that arises from cultural tourism. Although she states that there is evidence of a change from the traditional view of culture and tourism as "the icing on the cake"[78] of regeneration, it is interesting to note that the success of regeneration is frequently measured by:

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[74] Evans, G. and Foord, J. (2003), "Shaping the Cultural Landscape: Local Regeneration Effects," in *Urban Futures: Critical Commentaries on Shaping the City*, eds. M. Miles and T. Hall, London and New York: Routledge, pp.167-181 (p.167)

[75] Evans, G. (2005), "Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration," *Urban Studies,* vol.42, no.5/6, pp.959-983 (p.970)

[76] Evans and Foord (2003), "Shaping the Cultural Landscape: Local Regeneration Effects," p.167

[77] Smith, M.K. (2007b), "Towards a Cultural Planning Approach to Regeneration" in *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*, ed. M.K. Smith, Wallingford: CAB International, pp.1-11 (pp.1-2)

[78] Smith, M.K. (2007c), "Conclusion" in *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*, ed. M.K. Smith, Wallingford: CAB International, pp.175-178 (p.175)

> Increased visitor numbers, creation of a new image, increased income, expansion of other economic activities, population growth, enhanced civic pride, job creation, and further investment in attractions and environmental improvements.[79]

Many of these measures can be seen as evidence of a successful tourism policy, and this confusion can be due to the subsequent diversification of economies, through showcasing culture and heritage or prioritising community-based regeneration projects that are closely linked to tourism as well as culture.[80] However, recognition of the growing importance of the "cultural turn"[81] in local economies indicates a shift towards the prioritisation of culture in regeneration schemes. This has led to the development of what Andrew Tallon calls "the cultural city," which he states "has been engineered as a representation of city, regional and national identity."[82]   He makes a direct link between the use of arts and cultural policies in the regeneration of post-industrial cities, but also warns that this can lead to the homogenisation of culture "to the detriment of difference and individuality."[83] Consequently, whilst culture becomes more accepted as a useful part of economic and regeneration policy, it must be understood that this can come at a cost to the authentic cultures that have long since thrived within cities.

1.1.3 The Art

Art and Art History

Integral to definitions of culture within Britain is the practice and production of art. Bart Vendenabeele states that there is no universal concept of art[84] and, as such, it can incorporate any number of "objects, actions and beliefs"[85] which today transcend the boundaries of artworks presented by traditional art institutions.   There can, and should,

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[79] Tallon, A. (2010), *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* London and New York: Routledge, p.238
[80] ibid., p.246
[81] Freestone, R. and Gibson, C. (2006), "The Cultural Dimension of Urban Planning Strategies: An Historical Perspective" in *Culture, Urbanism and Planning*, eds. J. Monclús and M. Guàrdia, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.21-41 (p.21)
[82] Tallon (2010), *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, p.225
[83] ibid., p.226
[84] Vendenabeele, B. (2004), "'New' Media, Art and Intercultural Communication," *Journal of Aesthetic Education,* vol.38, no.4, pp.1-9 (p.4)
[85] Biggs, L. (2004), "'Art, Money, Parties' and Liverpool Biennial" in *Art, Money, Parties: New Institutions in the Political Economy of Contemporary Art*, ed. J. Harris, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.39-54 (p.39)

however, be certain commonalities, either in media, method or intent that identify an object as a piece of *art*.[86] These qualities exclude very little in practice, and the recent increase in artworks produced by using new forms of media has served to isolate some contemporary art from the process of institutionalisation that historically defines how it is understood in society. Contemporary art today is as inclusive of different practices and processes as at any time in its history, and Jean Baudrillard suggests that there have been key moments and artists in the twentieth century that have facilitated this change.[87]

A postmodern cultural theorist and sociologist, Baudrillard states that he sees a significant shift towards "abolishing the subject of art,"[88] and attributes this, in part, to the work of Marcel Duchamp and, later, Andy Warhol. Although not a mainstream view, he indicates the importance of Duchamp's *readymades* in allowing processes and practices not traditionally considered to be artistic to enter the mainstream art canon.

> The event of the readymade indicates a suspension of subjectivity where the artistic act is just the transposition of an object into an art object. Art is then only an almost magic operation: the object is transferred in its banality into an aesthetics that turns the entire world into a readymade. In itself, Duchamp's act is infinitesimal, but starting with him, all the banality of the world passes into aesthetics, and inversely, all aesthetics becomes banal.[89]

Baudrillard's idea that everything becomes banal reinforces the need for mediation to perpetuate within art in order to ensure its survival.[90] Consequently, Vendenabeele places a particular importance on the need to understand the "human values, intentions, interests, or habits" of an artwork,[91] and by doing so, enables art to function in many different roles. These have diversified alongside the media employed by artists and, therefore, art's functions can include, amongst others, the role of currency, fashion statement, moral exemplar, aspiration, sensual pleasure, investment, and celebration.[92]

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[86] Pooke, G. and Newall, D. (2008), *Art History: The Basics,* London: Routledge, p.16
[87] See Baudrillard 2005
[88] Baudrillard, J. (2005), *The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays,* New York: Semiotext(e), p.44
[89] ibid., p.52
[90] Cubitt, S. (2009a), "Art, Technology and Policy in the Twenty-First Century," *Third Text,* vol.23, no.5, pp.571-578 (p.571)
[91] Vendenabeele (2004), "'New' Media, Art and Intercultural Communication," pp.6-7
[92] Biggs (2004), "'Art, Money, Parties' and Liverpool Biennial," pp.40-41

However these functions are achieved, the artwork must undergo a process of mediation which is primarily undertaken by art institutions and the academy[93] and, thus, Vendenabeele's view that "art is the best possible window into another community"[94] only has meaning if we remember that the view through this window is constructed by the same systems that traditionally provide the tools for us to make sense of the world we live in.

Although the history of art stretches back many centuries, the art academy gave birth to the discipline of art history in the institutions of North America and Western Europe during the eighteenth century.[95] That these institutions were primarily white, male and middle class is noteworthy because, as Elizabeth C. Mansfield claims, art history plays an integral role in "shap[ing] a nation's sense of self."[96] Consequently, it became more prominent during the nineteenth century's "crescendo" of nationalism,[97] but the geographical disparity and elitism of art history has led to a skewed historicisation. With the majority of art history departments being located in the West, certain areas of art remain neglected whilst some new art forms are quickly accepted and, therefore, develop rapidly. Charles W. Haxthausen extends this analysis beyond the academy, and includes museums and galleries in the changing nature of art history. He suggests that not only does the declining interest in aestheticism affect the ability of art historians to provide an adequately critical scholarship, but the transformation of museums into "part of the entertainment industry" further exacerbates the problem.[98] This being the nature of the changing social and cultural issues at play in modern society is arguably where art historians situate themselves and the art they study and, therefore, the importance of a broader context becomes more apparent.[99]

[93] Crowther, P. (2004), "Defining Art, Defending the Canon, Contesting Culture," *British Journal of Aesthetics,* vol.44, no.4, pp.361-377 (p.363)

[94] Vendenabeele (2004), "'New' Media, Art and Intercultural Communication," p.1

[95] See Elkins 2007

[96] Mansfield, E.C. (2007), "Introduction: Making Art History a Profession" in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions*, ed. E.C. Mansfield, London and New York: Routledge, pp.1-9 (p.3)

[97] ibid.

[98] Haxthausen, C.W. (2002), "Introduction" in *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University*, ed. C.W. Haxthausen, Williamstown: Sterling and Francis Clark Art Institute, pp.ix-xxv (p.xi)

[99] Pooke and Newall (2008), *Art History: The Basics*, p.20

How art and art history, still often perceived as an activity for the elite, aligned with this need can be traced through the latter part of the twentieth century. In Jonathan Harris's *The New Art History* (2001), he identifies the riots of May 1968 as a key turning point for the arts and culture,[100] and states that the rioters':

> Cultural backgrounds and experience, relating, for instance, to factors of class, gender, and ethnicity were in sharp contrast to that of the narrow elite of upper-middle, mostly male and white people who had been able to study at universities before the 1960s' expansion.[101]

The suggestion here is that whilst it was from the elite that the majority of academics came, the politicisation of society which accompanied the social revolution of the 1960s, enabled more relevant art to be made and, therefore, a more relevant art history to be written. Stephen Deuchar suggests that this continued in the 1980s, although he also notes that it was only then, with a political imperative derived from Thatcherism in Britain and "a more overtly populist and commercially driven approach to display and exhibition-making," that this new approach to art history started to infiltrate the museum.[102]

Media and Media Art

As with culture, the field of media theory is vast, complex and impossible to adequately interrogate here, but its inclusion in the production and display of art is pertinent to this study.[103] The infiltration of technology into everyday life, and therefore as a medium for making art, has allowed artists to produce work that transcends "different sensory systems,"[104] and although this inevitably requires both the art world and art audiences to

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[100] Harris, J. (2001), *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, p.3. See also Meigh-Andrews 2006, Pooke and Newall 2008

[101] ibid., p.19

[102] Deuchar, S. (2002), "Whose Art History? Curators, Academics and the Museum Visitor in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s" in *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University*, ed. C.W. Haxthausen, Williamstown: Sterling and Francis Clark Art Institute, pp.3-13 (p.4)

[103] Walter Benjamin's seminal essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, first discussed the role of technology in art in 1936, and by the late 1960s Marshall McLuhan had made a significant contribution to the definition of media in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* and *The Media is the Massage*. For further information, see Benjamin 1936, McLuhan 1964; 1994, and McLuhan and Fiore 1967; Lister et al 2009.

[104] Huglo, M. and Villeneuve, J. (2005), "Memory, Media, Art," *SubStance,* vol.34, no.1, pp.78-80 (p.78)

accept the concept of "an alternative pathway for the production of art,"[105] it has developed its own distinct history rather than being fully subsumed by the discipline of art history. If *technology*, as the site of convergence between scientific research and art practice,[106] can be understood as the hardware that can be used in the production of art, *media* requires a more flexible definition. It is a more ephemeral concept which takes into consideration the "social and cultural contexts"[107] that exist within the many networks of communication and information that have emerged from developments in technology.[108] Whilst the term encompasses a wide range of equipment, generally electrical or battery-powered, it also includes the various processes to which this equipment can be applied.

As such, the history of media spans over half a century, and in 1981 Raymond Williams suggested that new technologies, such as cassettes and video recorders, demonstrate a significant new phase in cultural production,[109] although he also includes cinema and television in this definition, thus dating it back almost a century at the time of writing. Robert Hewison, however, goes further by stating that the changes signified a "new order" of information distribution and exchange that has restructured the "global pattern of industrial organisation,"[110] an idea that set the tone for future discussions. This new order coincided with the launch of the Internet following Tim Berners-Lee's proposal for the World Wide Web in 1989, and whilst its eventual ubiquity in the West could not have been foreseen at its launch, it has led to an emerging media culture that Anthony Elliot describes as "obscene...with its glimmering surfaces, its hallucinogenic intensities and its interpretive polyvalence."[111] Furthermore, it has contributed to a differentiation within art practice, with the term *new media* emerging at the end of the twentieth century. Lev Manovich's influential text, *The Language of New Media* (2001), outlines how new media must be

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[105] McQuire, S. and Radywyl, N. (2010), "From Object to Platform: Art, Digital Technology and Time," *Time Society,* vol.19, no.5, pp.5-27 (p.6)

[106] See Scrivener and Clements 2010

[107] Tillander, M. (2011), "Creativity, Technology, Art, and Pedagogical Practices," *Art Education,* vol.64, no.1, pp.40-46 (p.42)

[108] Hanhardt, J.G. and Villaseñor, M.C. (1995), "Video/Media Culture of the Late Twentieth Century," *Art Journal,* vol.54, no.4, pp.20-25 (p.21)

[109] Williams (1981), *Culture*, pp.110-111

[110] Hewison, R. (1990), *Future Tense: A New Art for the Nineties,* London: Methuen, p.42

[111] Elliott, A. (2009), *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, p.245

situated within the histories of art, computer technology, visual and information culture.[112] He states that the term incorporates widely understood components, such as "the Internet, Web sites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMs and DVD, [and] virtual reality," but that the number of different practices that could also be considered is almost without limit.[113] Furthermore, he highlights the key identifying process of new media as that of converting analogue media to digital representation and, thus, his definition would seem to exclude early cinema and video. However, despite being sequential storage devices rather than information stored in computer code,[114] he asserts the importance of film and photography as having laid the foundations for new media at the end of the nineteenth century. Consequently, whilst digitisation is a relatively recent phenomenon, Manovich traces its history back over a century, although many more academics indicate the development of computer technology during the Second World War as the key turning point.[115]

Whilst this raises questions about the concept of 'newness,'[116] Manovich's identification of a turning point resonates with art practice and production, and in the 1990s the terms *media art* or *new media art* were adopted to define the production of artworks which used materials other than those of more traditional painting or sculpture. Tribe and Jana argue that media art was "a response to the information technology revolution and the digitisation of cultural forms,"[117] and this development was supported by a wider acceptance of media art practices following a generation of art college graduates who had been given the opportunity to work with new media. They also suggest that, alongside inventions such as the Internet, media art was given the opportunity to develop at a time when there was "a conspicuous void" which was filled by installation work.[118] As suggested above, the history of media art arguably stretches back to the end of the nineteenth century, and it gathered momentum with the first application of computers in art production which took place in the 1960s. Consequently, the boundaries of media art are

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[112] See Manovich 2001

[113] Manovich, L. (2001), *The Language of New Media,* Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, p.19

[114] ibid., p.49

[115] See Gere 2004; Tofts 2005

[116] See Chun 2006

[117] Tribe, M. and Jana, R. (2006), *New Media Art,* Köln: Taschen, p.8

[118] ibid., p.9

somewhat clouded, perhaps even indistinguishable and, therefore, if Howard S. Becker's claim that "art worlds do not have boundaries" was true in the early 1980s,[119] it is even more applicable today.

> All art needs a network, a commitment to access, exhibition and curatorial advocacy, critical discussion and evaluation. It's easy to forget how rapidly the culture of interaction has become fixed in the imagination. At the same time, it's hard to shake off the connotation of novelty still associated with *new* media arts; a novelty that, to some extent, was necessary and responsible for capturing public attention for such work in the first place.[120]

This association with 'novelty' lends the practice a youthfulness that belies the length of its history, although the paucity of literature on this subject perhaps confirms its immaturity, and it will arguably only become fully integrated into established art and cultural networks once its obsession with newness has been overcome.

As discussed above, mediation is required for art to take its place in art history. Media art, however, has been segregated by the creation of the term *new media art*, a process that has been aided by the rise of the new media curator, although with more media art being produced and increasingly affordable display technologies available to museums and galleries, the practices of media art have begun to infiltrate art history discourses. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the most useful analysis of new media art comes in the form of a handbook for curatorial practice in this area, and that, within this text, the authors re-emphasise the new media art classification.

Graham and Cook state that new media art, whilst being similar to other contemporary art, differs because of its hybrid nature in "approach, method, content, and form."[121] They state that whilst some new media artworks are objects, the field also encompasses artworks that arise from the systems, networks and processes embodied by media.[122]

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[119] Becker, H.S. (1982; 2008), *Art Worlds,* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of CA Press, p.35

[120] Tofts, D. (2005), *Interzone: Media Art in Australia,* Fishermans Bend: Craftsman House, p.137

[121] Graham, B. and Cook, S. (2010), *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media*, Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, p.34

[122] ibid., p.36

Many of these processes have been understood under different names as the field has developed, and they suggest that these are as far-reaching as:

> Art & technology, art/sci, computer art, electronic art, digital art, digital media, intermedia, tactical media, emerging media, upstart media, variable media, locative media, immersive art, and Things That You Plug In.[123]

This lack of distinction within the field has proved problematic for new media art when attempting to locate itself, not only within art history, but also within the gallery system. This problem is further exacerbated by the roots of media art stretching back, in many disparate forms, to practices that are not necessarily identified within traditional art histories.

1.1.4 The Institution

Museums and Galleries

According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a museum is:

> A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.[124]

Art galleries exist in the same mould but are, of course, dedicated to the exhibition of art. Museums and galleries, as "temple[s] of culture,"[125] also serve an educational role in societies within a wider institutional context. Many academics have charted the history of the museum, and social and cultural theorist Tony Bennett states that the modern form of museums emerged in the late eighteenth century, and saw the combination of collecting institutions with the idea of international exhibitions to create the modern cultural organisation.[126] He suggests that, although they were initially intended to "distinguish the bourgeois public from the rough and raucous manners of the general populace by excluding

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[123] ibid., p.4

[124] The ICOM was founded in 1946, and currently has almost 30,000 members representing over 137 countries. (The International Council of Museums (2007), *Museum Definition* (Online))

[125] Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1992), *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge,* London and New York: Routledge, p.1

[126] See Bennett 1995

the latter,"[127] the nineteenth century enthusiasm for philanthropy saw the concept of the museum transform from a "treasure-house,"[128] into a form of cultural resource. Historically, the museum was an opportunity for wealthy individuals to showcase their private collections, and they gradually became national repositories for culturally significant artefacts for the purposes of education and enlightenment.[129] Kenneth Hudson suggests that although they developed "at a time when the people who owned and ran them had a contempt for the masses,"[130] attendance was recorded across the social hierarchy, and they evolved to include a diverse range of institutions, from national museums with considerable influence over, and impact on, the government's cultural policy, to smaller, locally-focused organisations with overt aims to work with, and alongside, local communities. Hudson, writing in the 1970s and 1980s, stated the importance of museums recognising that they could, and should, address social problems in order to maintain their audience[131] and, arguably, today's museums have a more diverse range of responsibilities, not least because grandiose institutions are seen to ostracise sectors of society rather than offer an open and educational experience for all.

The process of change is outlined in Section 1.2.4, but it is important to note that adopting this redefined role was not straightforward and, despite an increasing focus on widening participation in modern cultural policy, museums were "ill-adapted to be problem-solving agencies, although they may have a useful role to play in illustrating the nature of the problem."[132] Recent changes to museum policy have placed an emphasis on the importance of museums making sense to the communities they serve,[133] and in so doing, they can claim to offer social, educational and economic benefits to the local community, as well as

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[127] Bennett, T. (1995), *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics,* London and New York: Routledge, p.28

[128] Black, G. (2005), *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement,* London and New York: Routledge, p.4

[129] See Dean 1994

[130] Hudson, K. (1975), *A Social History of Museums: What the Visitors Thought,* London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, p.3

[131] Hudson, K. (1987), *Museums of Influence,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.188

[132] ibid., p.173

[133] Tlili, A. et al (2007), "New Labour's Socially Responsible Museum: Roles, Functions and Greater Expectations," *Policy Studies,* vol.28, no.3, pp.269-289 (pp.270-271)

representing those groups to funders, and both local and national government.[134] Consequently, Knell et al state that museums cannot only be understood as places for the exhibition of objects, but are instead "about people, and collections are merely manifestations of human desires,"[135] and it is this relationship with society that is fundamental to museum theory today.

Museums and Society

That museums and galleries have undergone such a significant transformation since they emerged in the eighteenth century seems to be widely accepted within academic literature, and in undergoing this evolution, museums have positioned themselves within a discourse of institutionalised service provision. The first step towards this role was the acceptance that museums and galleries should provide an educational role, although as recently as 1969, Bourdieu and Darbel stated that "museum visiting increases very strongly with increasing levels of education, and is almost exclusively the domain of the cultivated classes."[136] Consequently, their statement suggests that, regardless of whether entry is free or not, attending exhibitions is subject to a hidden cost of 'privilege' which acts as a preventative measure for certain levels of society.[137] This claim would suggest that museums may play a role in causing social exclusion in modern society and, therefore, the first dilemma they face is that of who enters the museum environment.

Education is widely believed to be a means of reaching different levels of society, and although education has always been at the forefront of museum and gallery practice, the nature of this educational role has changed significantly. Today, a much broader range of people are targeted by museum education, through ideas like lifelong learning, and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill states that where once museums were understood specifically as

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[134] Boylan, P.J. (1992), "Museums 2000 and the Future of Museums" in *Museums 2000: Politics, People, Professionals and Profit*, ed. P.J. Boylan, London and New York: Routledge and Museums Association, pp.1-21 (p.3)

[135] Knell, S.J. et al (2007), "Introduction" in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and are Changed*, eds. S.J. Knell et al, London and New York: Routledge, pp.xix-xxvi (p.xix)

[136] Bourdieu, P. and Darbel, A. (1969; 1991), *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public,* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.14-15

[137] ibid., p.113

educational institutions operating for the benefit of the working and middle classes, they now exist in a variety of forms with a range of different functions.[138]

> There is no essential museum…Not only is there no essential identity for museums…but such identities as *are* constituted are subject to constant change as the play of dominations shift and new relations of advantage and disadvantage emerge.[139]

Hooper-Greenhill is a prolific academic writer on museum education, and one of the shifts she alludes to here is the change to the way museums are expected to educate their audiences. Trained professionals now hold education co-ordinator roles within museums and galleries of all sizes, although across the museum sector such posts and programmes are often reliant on short-term funding.

In addition to their educational role, Hooper-Greenhill addresses the power that museums and galleries have in influencing the interpretation of issues, and she highlights that what museums exhibit, and how they choose to present these exhibitions, has a direct bearing on the meaning that can be extracted from visiting a museum.[140] She states that "museums have the power to affect lives by opening up or closing down subjectivities, attitudes and feelings towards the self and others."[141] As such, there must be a robust interrogation of how this power is used, especially because funding often comes from the government. Many writers, however, have defended the right and responsibility of museums and galleries to "engage with people and to reflect, accommodate or evoke that engagement,"[142] and to do so outside of the traditional institutions that govern society can be a useful tool for frequently overlooked groups.

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[138] Hooper-Greenhill (1992), *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, p.1; Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1991), *Museum and Gallery Education,* Leicester, London and New York Leicester University Press, pp.9-10. See also Hooper-Greenhill 2000
[139] Hooper-Greenhill (1992), *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, p.191
[140] Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2000), *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture,* London and New York: Routledge, p.3. See also Marstine 2006
[141] ibid., p.19
[142] Dunn, A. (2004), "Who Needs a Spin Doctor? Part Two," *Engage,* vol.15, pp.17-25 (p.24)

> The museum has to cater for increasingly fragmented publics who want to learn and do different things at different speeds. Further, the body of knowledge that could be imparted in museum displays is continuing to grow, and in certain instances it can be very complicated and even contradictory.[143]

Consequently, the idea that audiences can be served through a universal policy is problematic, and David Dean suggests that as "institutions for social as well as academic enlightenment," a museum's ability to present evidence of progress in an educational environment "allows the viewers to learn, reflect, and assimilate the world at their own pace."[144]

The debate outlined above, however, relies on certain assumptions that require further interrogation. The *publics* that museums need to cater for should ideally come from the local community that surrounds a museum, but this requirement demands an understanding by institutions of the complexity of such communities. A *community* can be varying numbers of people unified by certain factors, such as their geographical location, age or ethnicity, but this definition fails to adequately accommodate the complexity of different communities. Alan Kay suggests that individuals can occupy a number of different communities at any one time and, in modern society, with the boundless world of the Internet, the diversity of these communities is almost without limit.[145] Gerard Delanty, in his text *Community* (2003), suggests that although many have argued that community has been eroded by modernism,[146] he considers new technology to have become "socialised" by the level of integration into everyday communication.[147] He concludes that communication is at the core of the concept of community, and that communities persist because, as the world we live in becomes increasingly unstable and it expands beyond our direct experience, fostering a sense of belonging becomes more important.[148]

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[143] Wright, P. (1989), "The Quality of Visitors' Experiences in Art Museums" in *The New Museology*, ed. P. Vergo, London: Reaktion Books, pp.119-148 (p.119)

[144] Dean, D. (1994), *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice,* London and New York: Routledge, p.7

[145] Kay, A. (2000), "Art and Community Development: The Role the Arts Have in Regeneration Communities," *Community Development Journal,* vol.35, no.4, pp.414-424 (p.414)

[146] Delanty, G. (2003), *Community,* London and New York: Routledge, p.10

[147] ibid., p.169

[148] ibid., p.187

In this context, museums have had to look beyond their educational role in order to work with communities, and the inclusion of participative projects in the contemporary museum has been a relatively recent addition. Tepper and Gao indicate six areas of participation that occur within museums and galleries, and these criteria provide a good understanding of the potential of participative practice:

1. Participation can involve engagement with an institution, typically in a manner that is relatively predetermined (i.e. there is a time, place, and agreed-on method of engaging)
2. Participation involves personal practice and expression, which emphasises activities that require some personal competency and commitment and which often involve some form of individual expression
3. Participation is membership and giving. In some respects, membership and giving are subsets of institutional engagement
4. Participation involves literacy. In this context, literacy means acquiring skills and knowledge about a subject and is primarily an intellectual form of engagement
5. Scholars have looked at trust and confidence as a type of participation
6. Researchers have collected a variety of information on people's preferences and the meaning that citizens attach to certain activities[149]

Evidently, participation can be as simple as attendance at an exhibition, but Tepper and Gao suggest that it should also involve a level of engagement through education programmes or an involvement in the process of art making. How e*ngagement* is measured and understood is yet to be fully addressed in academic literature, although the term has become shorthand for explaining the positive role that public institutions can have on self-improvement or understanding. Richard Sandell states that there has been very little evaluation of a museum's role in the community, but that they can be seen as providing a "less threatening forum through which community members can gain the skills and confidence required to take control and play an active, self-determining role in their community's future."[150] This would suggest that the dynamic between the governing powers and the governed has shifted subtly, but as museums and galleries still operate

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[149] Tepper, S.J. and Gao, Y. (2008), "Engaging Art: What Counts?" in *Engaging Art: The Next Great Transformation of America's Cultural Life*, eds. S.J. Tepper and B. Ivey, London and New York: Routledge, pp.17-47 (pp.27-28)

[150] Sandell, R. (2002), "Museums and the Combating of Social Inequality: Roles, Responsibilities, Resistance" in *Museums, Society, Inequality*, ed. R. Sandell, London and New York: Routledge, pp.3-23 (p.7)

under government funding and as part of a formalised social structure, their role as institutions for social improvement can be seen to perpetuate.

Institutions and Institutionalisation

The participative and educational roles outlined above, many of which are funded by the state, contribute to museums being placed within the broader institutional framework that governs contemporary society. Berger and Luckmann, in their seminal text *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), state that institutions are historical organisations that have developed over a number of years. They assert that they cannot be understood in isolation from their own history or, therefore, the wider social context that surrounds them.[151] Accepting their existence as part of a lengthy history that intertwines many strands of social activity, institutions must be seen as a means of controlling "human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct," and channelling it in particular directions.[152] Therefore, not only do institutions govern behaviour, but they are also mediators of "the dialectic between particularity and universality."[153] As such, they help to form the discourses that dominate society and can be sites of considerable power,[154] although this assumes that institutions all share a similar level of organisation and structure when, in reality, there are significant levels of variability between different types of institution. On art institutions, Jonathan Harris states that whilst many develop with support from the state, some arise in direct opposition to it, although he also indicates that these tend to be "far less formally organised" institutions.[155] Nevertheless, they must share some qualities to enable them to be defined as institutions, and Mansfield suggests that "an institution is essentially a deliberate and recognisable set of organising principles...[which] manifest themselves physically as well as discursively."[156] She does go on to explain that contemporary institutions can exist in many forms, but it is often through a material manifestation or physical symbol that they are recognised.[157]

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[151] Berger and Luckmann 1966; 1971

[152] Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1966; 1971), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* London: Penguin, p.72

[153] Harvey, D. (2000), *Spaces of Hope,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.243

[154] ibid.

[155] Harris (2001), *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction*, p.74

[156] Mansfield (2007), "Introduction: Making Art History a Profession," p.1

[157] See Scott 2001

With physical presence shown to be important to the identification of institutions, locating an organisation within a building can be seen as integral to the process of institutionalisation. However, Berger and Luckmann suggest that the process is more fundamental, and again they place great importance on "the historical process" that institutions undergo in their creation.[158] They state that the process of institutionalisation can happen anywhere that there is "collectively relevant conduct,"[159] and Anderson and Carter suggest that institutionalisation is where "some component or subsystem is assigned (or assumes) responsibility to perform specific major functions for the system."[160] It is, therefore, no surprise that institutionalisation occurs within arts and culture, especially given the new roles expected of museums and galleries outlined above. Hewison states that even the avant-garde "cannot resist the institutionalisation of the academy,"[161] and this is further reinforced by the fact that, in a society littered with institutions including the government, schools and the family, the word *institution* in art "conjures up images of buildings and the power they have come to represent,"[162] such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York or, more relevant to this study, the Tate galleries.

Many of these symbols have been perceived as negative, and Anton C. Zijderveld makes a strong case that:

> There is a very basic distrust vis-à-vis institutions [because]…people these days are inclined to view institutions not only as impediments to privacy and individual liberty, but also as sources of alienation which endanger their authenticity and subjective identity.[163]

In light of this, he suggests that there needs to be a rethinking of institutions as the world and its parameters are altered by the globalising and decentralising forces of the

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[158] Berger and Luckmann (1966; 1971), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* p.72

[159] ibid., p.80

[160] Anderson, R.E. and Carter, I. (1999), *Human Behaviour in the Social Environment: A Social Systems Approach*, New York: Aldine de Gruyer, p.291

[161] Hewison (1990), *Future Tense: A New Art for the Nineties*, p.49

[162] Harris, J. (2004), "Introduction: Elements Towards a Historical Sociology of Contemporary Art" in *Art, Money, Parties: New Institutions in the Political Economy of Contemporary Art*, ed. J. Harris, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.11-37 (p.14)

[163] Zijderveld, A.C. (2000), *The Institutional Imperative: The Interface of Institutions and Networks,* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p.13

Internet.[164] McLuhan and Fiore alluded to this idea by suggesting that the mediatised youth of the 1960s were being suppressed by society's institutions,[165] and it is perhaps the process of globalisation through media, or "the poetry and beauty of the new technological environment,"[166] that has led to Zijderveld's scepticism. Nevertheless, institutions prevail in modern society, to the extent that they are still considered to be "the foundation of social life."[167] Furthermore, these existing institutions can be seen as so powerful that they shape any new institutions that emerge.

> Whenever and wherever people set out together to realise certain goals, their actions and interactions almost immediately form patterns of behaviour to which values and norms are related…Institutional patterns emerge which incidentally often bear an uncanny resemblance to the institutions they had left behind.[168]

Here Zijderveld seems to suggest that, whilst advocating the idea that society is now "post-institutional,"[169] it remains locked into a self-perpetuating cycle determined by its own institutional structure.

1.1.5 Conclusion

Although far from comprehensive, the literature that has been reviewed above reveals certain important issues. The city is understood as a constantly changing entity, but change is primarily imposed by government through a wide range of regeneration and cultural policies. Similar top-down approaches can also be seen in museum and cultural policy, just as art is mediated by external, often academic, commentators. This being the case, is it important to understand how individual organisations respond to these policies, and the literature reviewed here shows some omissions from the existing literature that need to be addressed. Every city-based institution that is affected by government policy provides a fascinating case study for examining the way society continues to evolve, and by studying Moviola's transformation into FACT over a twenty-five year period, this thesis will build

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[164] ibid., p.21
[165] See McLuhan and Fiore 1967
[166] McLuhan, M. and Fiore, Q. (1967), *The Medium is the Massage*, London: Penguin, p.100
[167] Campbell, J.L. (2004), *Institutional Change and Globalisation,* Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, p.1
[168] Zijderveld (2000), *The Institutional Imperative: The Interface of Institutions and Networks*, p.37
[169] ibid., p.9

upon the literature reviewed here. It aims to situate the new model of the media centre within existing museum literature, and it will integrate innovative participative and interactive community arts into this discourse. Existing literature on Liverpool's rich cultural history does not include an interrogation of FACT, either as an institution in its own right or in terms of its contribution to the city's wider cultural network and processes of regeneration and, therefore, the following chapters provide such an analysis. Building this analysis, however, requires a solid understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural environment within which FACT exists, and Chapter 1.2 will explore the context surrounding the themes presented here.

1.2 Historical and Cultural Context

> *I found myself in a dirty, sooty city. It was night, and winter, and dark, and raining. I was in Liverpool...Everything was extremely unpleasant, black and opaque – just as I felt then. But I had had a vision of unearthly beauty, and that was why I was able to live at all. Liverpool is 'the pool of life.'*[170]

1.2.1 Introduction

Understanding the history of any organisation, action or set of circumstances requires knowledge of the context within which the subject of study emerged or occurred. Merseyside Moviola was launched in 1985 in a city that had enjoyed significant wealth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but suffered the effects of economic decline throughout the twentieth century. This decline reached its peak in the 1980s to the extent that, in 1982, the *Daily Mirror* wrote that:

> They should build a fence around [Liverpool] and charge admission. For sadly, it has become a 'showcase' of everything that has gone wrong in Britain's major cities."[171]

Despite, and perhaps because of, this history, Liverpool has had a vibrant and politically engaged arts and cultural scene, with many museums, galleries and artists operating within the city. The cultural scene has been heavily influenced by national and international factors and, therefore, this chapter introduces a history of Liverpool, to the end of the 1980s when Moviola was formalised, setting it within a wider British and global context. This history will illustrate the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions that have shaped the city's cultural scene today.

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[170] Jung, C.G. (1961; 1995), *Memories, Dreams, Reflections,* London: Fontana Press, pp.223-224

[171] Cited in Grunenberg, C. and Knifton, R. (2007b), "The Crater of the Volcano: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde" in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, eds. C. Grunenberg and R. Knifton, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.17-40 (p.18); Lane, T. (1987), *Liverpool: Gateway of Empire,* London: Lawrence and Wishart, p.13

1.2.2 Context: Liverpool

An Economic History

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw rapid industrial change across Britain, and whilst population growth was relatively modest overall,[172] urban areas grew significantly. Founded in 1207, Liverpool remained a small settlement for centuries, and only gained city status in 1880, although the previous decades had seen major development. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the population of Liverpool was 82,000 and by 1831 it stood at 202,000.[173] This was comparable with other seaport cities, most notably Glasgow, which grew to a similar size over the same period of time. The clustering of populations in urban areas was linked to the developing economy and the subsequent availability of employment, and with the industrial revolution underway at this time, cities that could support the growth in manufacturing by providing trade links prospered. Consequently, cities on Britain's coast became important ports for the import of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods, and as working-class dock societies developed, "great seaports and industrial towns had more in common with each other than with their nearby rural counties."[174]   This was particularly apparent with Britain's Atlantic seaports, and considerable similarities can be found, beyond comparisons of population growth patterns, between cities like Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol.

The development of the Atlantic economy was a considerable factor in Britain's economic growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[175] and Liverpool grew on the strength of its geographical position near the mouth of the wide estuary of the River Mersey. Communication systems of canals and railways developed in the North West between Liverpool's port and a hinterland rich with agricultural, earthenware and textile production industries.[176] Consequently, when the Corporation of Liverpool, precursor of Liverpool City Council, successfully promoted the construction of the city's first dry dock in

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[172] Lee, C.H. (1986), *The British Economy Since 1700: A Macroeconomic Perspective,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.5

[173] McCord, N. and Purdue, B. (2007), *British History 1815-1914,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.87

[174] ibid., p.227

[175] Lee (1986), *The British Economy Since 1700: A Macroeconomic Perspective*, p.121

[176] Stobart, J. (2004), *The First Industrial Region: North-west England, c.1700-60,* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, p.149

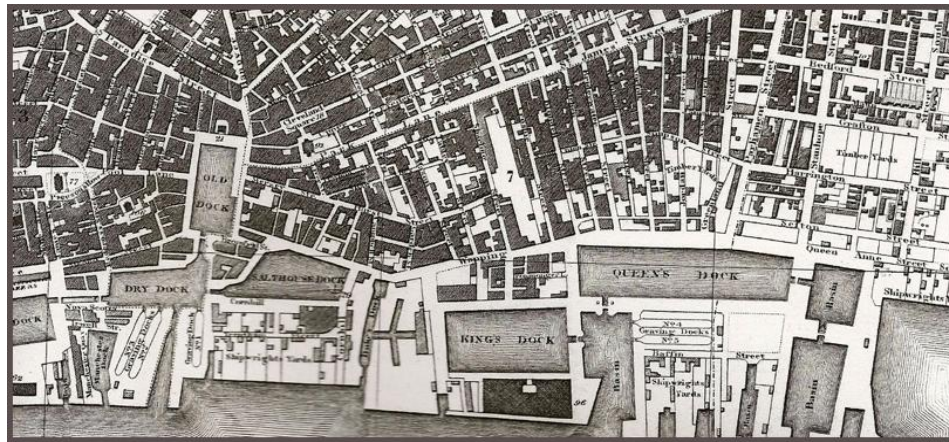1709 and the world's first wet dock in 1715,[177] the city's shipping industry was firmly established.

Fig. 1.2.1 Map of Liverpool's wet and dry docks, c.1823/4

The wet docks facilitated the development of an ocean-going trade in an area that had previously been hindered by frequent silting,[178] and Liverpool, so long on the periphery of Britain's trade industry, developed into a strong and bountiful port economy.[179] Liverpool traded primarily in slaves, as part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and its corollaries: sugar, tobacco and cotton.[180] Liverpool established itself as Britain's most important port of the Slave Trade, with six times as many slaving ships passing through the Liverpool docks than London by its peak. At the turn of the nineteenth century, 107 ships left Liverpool for West Africa between 1793 and 1804, compared to only eighteen from London and five from Bristol.[181] To further illustrate the importance of the transatlantic trade during the eighteenth century, the ports at Hull and Newcastle trebled in size whilst Liverpool's port grew fifteen-fold.[182]

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[177] Four further wet docks were built in Liverpool by the end of the eighteenth century (Lynch, A. (1994), *Weathering the Storm: The Mersey Docks Financial Crisis, 1970-1974,* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p.1; Sharples, J. (2004), *Liverpool,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p.7; p.10)

[178] Sharples (2004), *Liverpool*, p.93

[179] Chandler, G. (1960), *Liverpool Shipping: A Short History,* London: Phoenix House, p.33

[180] Gifford QC, Lord A.M. et al (1989), *Loosen the Shackles: First Report of the Liverpool 8 Inquiry into Race Relations in Liverpool,* Guilford: Karia Press, p.26

[181] See Lamb 1976

[182] Stobart (2004), *The First Industrial Region: North-west England 1700-60*, p.18

The Slave Trade was abolished in 1807, however, and whilst Liverpool still imported materials such as cotton for the textile industry of Lancashire and Yorkshire, Britain's economy began to change. By the end of the nineteenth century, the economy, whilst still heavily reliant on trade, saw the development of the financial markets and their location in London impacted on Britain's seaports, although there was sufficient legacy in Liverpool for the number of millionaires and half-millionaires to be noteworthy at this time.[183] Having developed over a relatively short period of time, however, and with the top of the city's social hierarchy not being the wealthy landowners of the British aristocracy, Liverpool's wealthiest individuals were self-made merchants who had been successful businessmen during the port's heyday. David Cannadine, in his analysis of social class in Britain, cites former Prime Minister William Gladstone as the embodiment of this unusual social hierarchy in Liverpool.

> His father was a self-made entrepreneur, who established a fortune on the bases of trade, property and shipping. He was based at Liverpool, it was there that Gladstone himself was born, and for all his Eton and Christchurch education, he remained 'Liverpool underneath.'[184]

Economic Difficulties and Decline

On either side of the turn of the twentieth century, two Liverpool historians, Leo H. Grindon and Ramsay Muir, published books on the history of Lancashire and Liverpool respectively. In 1907 Muir depicted a city that was building "twin citadels," the University of Liverpool and the Anglican Cathedral, which would "look across the ship-thronged estuary, monuments of a new and more generous aspiration."[185] Grindon, however, writing a few years earlier in 1892, stated that:

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[183] McCord and Purdue (2007), *British History 1815-1914*, pp.492-493

[184] Cannadine, D. (1998; 2000), *Class in Britain,* London: Penguin, p.89

[185] The citadels to which Muir refers are the University of Liverpool, founded in 1882 and awarded its Royal Charter in 1903, and the Anglican Cathedral, with construction commencing in 1904 and being completed in 1978 (Muir, J.R.B. (1907), *A History of Liverpool,* London: University Press of Liverpool, p.340)

> Much of the sprightliness of the Liverpool character – the perennial uncertainty underlying the equally well-marked disposition to "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die"...seems to account for the high percentage of shops of the glittering class and that deal in luxuries. Making their money in the way they do, the Liverpool people care less to hoard it than to indulge in the spending.[186]

Grindon's more cynical analysis of the Liverpool economy, and the suggestion that tomorrow could bring an end to the city's good fortunes, seems, with hindsight, to be a more realistic vision of the city's future, and although a historian could not have been expected to predict the magnitude of the turbulence ahead, Muir's depiction seems rather naive by contrast. The British economy during the twentieth century not only fluctuated in terms of growth, but it also, at times, grew in some regions whilst it slumped and barely recovered in others.[187]

Although the start of the twentieth century witnessed a relatively buoyant economy, the First World War (1914–1918) "made unprecedented demands on the economy and on society" which altered its course considerably.[188] British trade was particularly badly hit, as war with Europe interrupted its flow, and the end of the war brought increased competition and tariffs.[189] The pattern of global trade shifted "from Europe and North America to the Far East, Latin America and, in the long run, Africa"[190] and, consequently, cities that had prospered through the transatlantic trade were suddenly on the periphery of trade activity. Liverpool, and other dock cities which had large numbers of unskilled labourers in casual employment, were suddenly in a position where these dockers could no longer find work. Furthermore, by the Depression of the 1930s, Liverpool's population was at a peak of 850,000[191] and with the decline of the docks, the city was left "with a hole that

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[186] Grindon, L.H. (1892), *Lancashire: Historical and Descriptive Notes,* London: Seeley and Co, p.56

[187] Lee (1986), *The British Economy Since 1700: A Macroeconomic Perspective*, p.255

[188] Peden, G.C. (1991), *British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher,* Hemel Hempstead: Philip Allan, p.34

[189] ibid., p.54

[190] Goldsmith, M. (1988), "Social, Economic and Political Trends and Their Impact on British Cities" in *Regenerating the Cities: The UK Crisis and the US Experience*, eds. M.H. Parkinson et al, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.27-38 (p.28)

[191] A Vision of Britain Through Time (2009), *Liverpool, Historical Statistics: Population* (Online)

nothing else has filled."[192]   The economic difficulties of the Depression were further compounded by being immediately followed by the Second World War which inflicted extensive damage on Liverpool's economy and, notably, its urban fabric.   No redevelopment strategy was employed in Liverpool as it was in other Blitzed cities,[193] and areas of the city centre still bear the scars of bombings today.   Consequently, Liverpool entered the second half of the twentieth century in a state of sustained decline, and in the following decades, despite a brief economic upturn in the 1950s and early 1960s which saw much improved employment opportunities and slum clearance following the construction of new towns such as Speke, Kirkby and Skelmersdale, Liverpool consistently had higher levels of unemployment than the national average.[194]

(L) Fig. 1.2.2 Slums being demolished during the 1960s, Scotland Road, Liverpool

(R) Fig. 1.2.3 Model of the Speke estate, planned in 1936 and completed in 1957

By the 1980s, the economic situation in Liverpool had become a key political issue, compounded by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's opposition to Trade Unions in a city where trade unionism had a long history.   For a number of years the government had offered incentives to manufacturers to open factories in the region, including the Ford car manufacturing plant at Halewood,[195] and some public services were transferred to Liverpool.   Consequently, public sector unions took the place of the unions for dock

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[192] Parkinson, M.H. (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure" in *Regenerating the Cities: The UK Crisis and the US Experience*, eds. M.H. Parkinson et al, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.110-127 (p.117)

[193] Todd, S. (2008), "Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class," *Contemporary British History,* vol.22, no.4, pp.501-518 (p.502)

[194] See Selwood 2009; Belchem 2007; Belchem 2000; Belchem 1992; Parkinson 1988; Parkinson 1985; Waller 1981

[195] Ford opened their factory in Halewood in 1963, with manufacturing ending in 2000. From 2001, the factory was operated by Jaguar, and since 2005 by Jaguar Land Rover (Jaguar International (2012), *Jaguar Locations* (Online)

labourers, and in opposition to the Conservative government, shifted the city towards the political left.[196] However, the absence of a long-term manufacturing base in Liverpool was problematic and the new factories brought new dilemmas to the city.[197] "Far more than in other cities, [Liverpool] is dominated by a small number of very large absentee employers,"[198] or perhaps more accurately, multinational corporations with headquarters outside Liverpool and, therefore, the employers' responsibility to the local area was less engrained. Consequently, when economic difficulties emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, these newly opened factories, operated by companies with no traditional base in the city, were often the first to close. By the time the first Thatcher government formed in 1979, Liverpool was in dire financial straits, with the government providing 62% of the city's income, and despite rates rising from 37–55% during the early 1980s, by 1983 central government support had reduced to 44%.[199] Liverpool's voters voiced their opposition during general elections, and whilst the 1979 election results were largely consistent with national voting patterns, in 1983 the city swung 2.4% from Conservative to Labour whist the national average was a 3.9% swing the other way.[200]

Associated Social Problems

Aside from registering their dissatisfaction at the polls, Britain's inner-city populations reacted angrily to Conservative government policies, and in the summer of 1981, there was a period of social unrest in some British cities, with Brixton, London and Toxteth, Liverpool experiencing the worst of the violence. Whilst these riots have frequently been attributed to race relations problems, with a precedent of race riots in Liverpool in 1919,[201] it was not the only issue at play. However, following the arrest of a black Toxteth resident, an uprising occurred in the area on 3 July 1981 that led to several days of violence, looting and arson, numerous arrests, injuries to both police and rioters, and one death.[202]

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[196] Parkinson (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure," p.115
[197] Parkinson, M.H. (1985), *Liverpool on the Brink: One City's Struggle Against Government Cuts,* Hermitage: Policy Journals, p.11
[198] Parkinson (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure," p.117
[199] Parkinson (1985), *Liverpool on the Brink: One City's Struggle Against Government Cuts*, p.10
[200] Crick, M. (1984), *Militant,* London: Faber and Faber, p.143
[201] Rowe, M. (1998), *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain,* Aldershot: Ashgate and Brookfield, USA, p.51
[202] See Jefferson 1983

Fig. 1.2.4 Front page of *Liverpool Daily Post* during the Toxteth Riots, 1981

A subsequent government enquiry and report by Lord Scarman acknowledged that the problem extended beyond the black community and issues of racial disharmony[203] and the riots must, therefore, be understood as more fundamental than initial analysis, and particularly the media, depicted. One significant factor in the dissatisfaction of Toxteth residents was unemployment, with young ethnic minorities being more affected than other sectors of the population, and although by no means the worst area in the city,[204] unemployment had risen in Toxteth by 3,000 from June 1980–June 1981, with the worst affected being young, poorly educated men, ethnic minorities and older males who had worked in declining industries.[205]

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[203] See Scarman 1981; 1982; Gifford 1989; Moore 1992

[204] Taaffe, P. and Mulhearn, T. (1988), *Liverpool: A City That Dared to Fight,* London: Fortress, p.52

[205] Scarman, Lord L.G. (1981; 1982), *The Scarman Report: the Brixton Disorders 10-12 April 1981: Report of an Inquiry,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, p.32; Vinen, R. (2009), *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era,* London: Simon and Schuster, p.132

Fig. 1.2.5 Damage to buildings on Lodge Lane, Liverpool, following the Toxteth Riots, 1981

Unemployment and its effects are extremely damaging, and whilst the problem sounds somewhat self-explanatory, its ramifications are complex, leading to a lack of investment, poverty, low living standards and social exclusion. By the mid-1980s, unemployment was at 27% in Liverpool, double the national average,[206] and whilst the South enjoyed an overall rise in employment during the first half of Thatcher's premiership, employment figures in the North fell by over one million.[207]   The decline of Liverpool's docks was a huge contributing factor to the level of unemployment in the city, and with reduced employment opportunities, the registered dock labour force decreased from about 12,000 in 1969 to only 1,000 in 1989. The administrative body for dock work, the National Dock Labour Board, was abolished in 1989, and within the next twelve months, the number of registered dock workers fell by a further 30%, and by the end of the twentieth century only 450 people were recorded despite a significant increase in the volume of cargo passing through Britain's ports due to containerisation.[208] This decline led to population displacement and current population figures for Liverpool stand at 445,200, almost 50% less than the population of the 1930s.[209]

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[206] Parkinson (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure," p.117

[207] Russell, D. (2004), *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination,* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, p.29

[208] Stoney, P. (1999), "The Abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme and the Revival of the Port of Liverpool," *Economic Affairs,* vol.19, no.2, pp.18-22 (p.20). See also Marsh and Ryan 1989

[209] Liverpool City Council (2011), *The City of Liverpool Key Statistics Bulletin*, Issue 11, July 2011 (Online)

British Politics in the 1980s

The situation outlined above, which emerged as a consequence of twentieth century economic decline, was challenging for many areas of Britain, as well as for the newly formed national government. Margaret Thatcher's first Conservative government was formed in 1979 in the immediate aftermath of the 'Winter of Discontent'[210] with a majority of forty-three, but following the introduction of stringent economic reforms, by 1981 she was registering "the lowest prime ministerial popularity rating since such polls had first been taken."[211] However, the British economy showed signs of recovery by the mid-1980s, and following Britain's success in the Falklands War (April–June 1982), she won the 1983 general election with a huge majority of 144 seats. General elections are often won, and lost, on matters of the economy, and there had been a significant improvement on what had been the worst economic recession since the 1930s.[212] Inflation had dropped from 20–8%[213] and, following her policy of privatisation, Britain's middle class voters supported Thatcher's Conservative government emphatically. However, the same period also saw unemployment figures hit three million, another problem not seen since the 1930s,[214] and it became clear that the governing Conservative Party were little concerned with the sectors of society that did not comprise their traditional voters.

> In 1983 and 1987, the Conservatives made the political weather
> and could afford to be unconcerned about the areas that seemed
> always to be shrouded in mist and drizzle.[215]

This was demonstrated by Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' scheme for council house occupants, a policy which, whilst beneficial to some, would always be impossible for others, particularly the elderly, the unemployed and those with irregular incomes.[216]

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[210] The 'Winter of Discontent' (1978-1979) was a period with a significant number of strikes and industrial action which stemmed from James Callaghan's Labour government's attempts to control inflation by restricting increases in public sector pay.

[211] Green, E.H.H. (2006), *Thatcher,* London: Hodder Arnold, pp.3-4; Vinen (2009), *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, p.104

[212] Norpoth, H. (1992), *Confidence Regained: Economics, Mrs. Thatcher, and the British Voter,* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p.93

[213] Vinen (2009), *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, p.105

[214] Norpoth (1992), *Confidence Regained: Economics, Mrs. Thatcher, and the British Voter*, p.93

[215] Evans, E.J. (2004), *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, London and New York: Routledge, p.29

[216] Johnson, C. (1991), *The Economy Under Mrs. Thatcher 1979-1990,* London: Penguin, p.152

Further compounding the dissatisfaction of these overlooked sectors of society, Thatcher pursued two key areas: the reduction of the Welfare State, a vital lifeline for those at the bottom of society; and the reduction of the power of Trade Unions. During the course of Thatcher's premiership, the Conservative government introduced five parliamentary acts which altered the role, and thus diminished the power, of Trade Unions,[217] and although she had fought a long battle against them, the number of acts that were introduced in little over ten years would suggest that there was no coherent single vision being introduced.[218] However, Trade Unions were so affected by Thatcher's reforms that they have never regained the foothold they had during the 1970s. By contrast, although the Thatcher governments systematically scaled back the boundaries of the Welfare State as part of their stringent economic reforms, they never succeeded in quashing opposition to this "demolition,"[219] although the cuts that were made were keenly felt by the poorest in society.

It was on these issues that Thatcher's relationship with Liverpool was so damaged, and in contrast to the Conservative national government, Liverpool City Council became, from the late 1970s onwards, increasingly influenced by the far left Militant Tendency of the Labour Party. The Militant Tendency, arising from the *Militant* newspaper which "worked covertly from within the Labour Party,"[220] was a Trotskyist group which, from Trade Unionist roots, slowly began to infiltrate Liverpool City Council, and by 1979 seven Militant Councillors had been elected in the city.[221]

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[217] The five Parliamentary Acts were the Employment Act 1980; Employment Act 1982; Trade Union Act 1984; Employment Act 1988; Employment Act 1990

[218] Hanson, C.G. (1991), *Taming the Trade Unions: A Guide to the Thatcher Government's Employment Reforms, 1980-90,* Basingstoke: Macmillan, p.15

[219] Overbeek, H. (1990), *Global Capitalism and National Decline: The Thatcher Decade in Perspective,* London: Unwin Hyman, p.218

[220] Westlake, M. (2001), *Kinnock: The Biography,* London: Little, Brown and Company, p.184

[221] Atkinson, H. and Wilks-Heeg, S. (2000), *Local Government from Thatcher to Blair: The Politics of Creative Autonomy,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.67; Crick, M. (1986), *The March of Militant,* London: Faber and Faber, p.222

Fig. 1.2.6 A Militant rally at St George's Hall, Liverpool, 1984

With Council leader John Hamilton being little more than a figurehead, Deputy Leader Derek Hatton became the *de facto* leader between 1983 and 1986,[222] and during this time Liverpool City Council pursued a number of controversial and confrontational policies, which included "the setting of an illegal budget, and the symbolic sacking of all public employees in Liverpool."[223] At this time, Liverpool had an accumulated deficit of about £90 million,[224] and responding to the government's withdrawal of financial support, Liverpool City Council threatened to bankrupt the city and, thus, attempted to blackmail the government into providing more money.[225] The actions of the Militant Tendency in Liverpool was reviled nationally, within its own party and, crucially, by the Trade Unions that had been an early support, with Labour leader Neil Kinnock eventually expelling those known to be involved with the Militant Tendency in 1986.[226] This action was considered to be "Neil Kinnock's Falklands,"[227] comparing the potential impact on his popularity to the aftermath of the Falklands War on Margaret Thatcher's performance at the polls. For the city, however, the damage was significant, and its isolation from the country's political core was more pronounced.[228]

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[222] Williams, R.J. (2004), *The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century,* London and New York: Routledge, p.108
[223] ibid., p.110
[224] Crick (1984), *Militant*, p.161
[225] Parkinson (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure," p.115
[226] See Liverpool Black Caucus 1986; Lane 1987; Westlake 2001
[227] Crick (1986), *The March of Militant*, p.293
[228] Goldsmith (1988), "Social, Economic and Political Trends and Their Impact on British Cities," p.34

Michael Heseltine and the MDC

Urban theorist and economist Michael Parkinson states that Militant thrust the city into a "self-destructive political struggle [that] fascinated and appalled people"[229] and alongside this crisis of public image, the ever-worsening economic situation and recent social upheaval ensured that Thatcher could not continue to ignore the problem of Liverpool. In the direct aftermath of the Toxteth riots in 1981, Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine was dispatched to Liverpool by Margaret Thatcher and assumed the unofficial role of 'Minister for Merseyside.' Despite his obvious wealth, Heseltine expressed empathy for the city's inhabitants.

> [Race] was perceived to be the root cause of Liverpool's problems.
> It wasn't, of course. It was a violent and dramatic symptom, not
> the problem itself, which stemmed from the long-term structural
> and economic decline of the city under a local leadership quite
> unable to rise to the challenge of events.[230]

Although by traditional Conservative standards from "humble origins,"[231] Heseltine was wealthy, brash and rapidly rising through the Conservative Party ranks. However, "he was a show-business politician, in a show-business town,"[232] and on his visits to Liverpool over a three week period in July and August 1981, he was surprisingly well received.

Fig. 1.2.7 Michael Heseltine on a visit to Liverpool after the Toxteth Riots, 1981

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[229] Parkinson (1988), "Liverpool's Fiscal Crisis: An Anatomy of Failure," p.110
[230] Heseltine, M. (2000), *Life in the Jungle: My Autobiography,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, p.219. See also Fry 2008
[231] Vinen (2009), *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, p.118
[232] Crick, M. (1997), *Michael Heseltine: A Biography,* London: Penguin, p.225

As one of the favoured politicians of the press,[233] Heseltine brought significant media attention to Liverpool and, to compensate for his lack of long-term presence in the city, created the Merseyside Task Force in 1982, a panel of civil servants and city executives who were to consult him on issues in the area.[234] This, however, placed unelected agencies at the centre of policy decision-making[235] and, as a consequence, local government, the traditional overseers of regeneration, were bypassed, a situation which was then implemented nationwide following wider local governance reform. [236]

Aside from the Merseyside Task Force, Heseltine had further ideas for the city, with his plans outlined in a memo to Thatcher, entitled *It Took a Riot*, which he composed after his visits to Liverpool in 1981. Here he outlined a number of policy options:

- A continued ministerial commitment to Merseyside is required for a specific period of, say, one year
- A single regional office is needed in Liverpool comprising the main departments concerned with economic development. Similar arrangements should be adopted for other conurbations
- Our industrial, regional and training policies should be reassessed within the new context and administered with flexibility
- As part of this, we should involve the private sector and the financial institutions to a far greater degree than hitherto
- The future of the metropolitan counties and the GLC should be examined quickly
- Substantial additional public resources should be directed to Merseyside and other hard-pressed urban areas to create jobs on worthwhile schemes[237]

However, the memo was leaked to the national media, and despite showing a clear understanding of the extent of the Liverpool problem, the government had been actively reducing such support and, therefore, Thatcher ignored the memo rather than act upon

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[233] See Crick 1997

[234] McBane, J. (2008), *The Rebirth of Liverpool: The Eldonian Way,* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.108-109; Parkinson (1985), *Liverpool on the Brink: One City's Struggle Against Government Cuts*, p.15; Parkinson, M. and Duffy, J. (1984), "Government's Response to Inner-City Riots: The Minister for Merseyside and the Task Force," *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.37, no.1, pp.76-96 (p.76)

[235] Imrie, R. and Thomas, H. (1999), "Assessing Urban Policy and the Urban Development Corporations" in *British Urban Policy: An Evaluation of the Urban Development Corporations*, eds. R. Imrie and H. Thomas, London: SAGE, pp.3-39 (p.4)

[236] ibid., p.11; Cochrane, A. (1999), "Just Another Failed Urban Experiment? The Legacy of the Urban Development Corporations" in *British Urban Policy: An Evaluation of the Urban Development Corporations*, eds. R. Imrie and H. Thomas, London: SAGE, pp.246-258 (p.250)

[237] Heseltine (2000), *Life in the Jungle: My Autobiography*, p.228

Heseltine's findings.   Concurrently, the Prime Minister was advised by her Chancellor, Geoffrey Howe, to implement a programme of "managed decline" in Liverpool,[238] and whilst this approach was not adopted either, it demonstrates the attitudes that prevailed at the highest level of government towards Britain's post-industrial regions.

Heseltine's role as 'Minister for Merseyside,' and his subsequent recommendations, exposed the government to the criticism that they only took heed of "the problems of economic and social deprivation in the poorest city in Britain when they threatened public order."[239]   However, his actions in Liverpool coincided with the introduction of the Urban Development Corporations (UDC), part of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act of 1980. The UDCs were intended to:

> Secure the regeneration of its area...by bringing land and buildings into effective use, encouraging the development of existing and new industry and commerce, creating an attractive environment and ensuring that housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area.[240]

Although not being implemented until after the riots of 1981, the London Docklands Development Corporation and the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC),[241] saw untested regeneration strategies implemented in locations that were most in need. However, as new policies, it was not until the second and third rounds of UDCs that their imperfections could be addressed.[242]   Nevertheless, the UDCs had certain statutory powers and control over planning decisions which meant that action could be taken quickly,[243] although this reinforced the government's top-down approach which was not always perceived to act in the best interests of the local residents.[244]

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[238] Cabinet Papers (1981), *Letter from Chancellor Geoffrey Howe to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 4 September 1981* (Online)

[239] Parkinson (1985), *Liverpool on the Brink: One City's Struggle Against Government Cuts*, p.15

[240] Great Britain (1980), *Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980*, London: The Stationery Office, Section 136.1-136.2

[241] Moore, B. (1992), "Taking on the Inner Cities" in *The Economic Legacy 1979-1992*, ed. J. Michie, London: Academic Press, London, pp.115-137 (p.129)

[242] In the 1980s, the following UDCs were also formed: Black Country, Teesside, Trafford Park, Tyne and Wear, Cardiff Bay (1987); Central Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield (1988); and Bristol (1989).

[243] Moore (1992), "Taking on the Inner Cities," p.129

[244] Colenutt, B. (1999), "New Deal or No Deal for People-Based Regeneration?" in *British Urban Policy: An Evaluation of the Urban Development Corporations*, eds. R. Imrie and H. Thomas, London: SAGE, pp.233-245 (p.233)

As the MDC developed, their objectives became increasingly led by tourism and leisure within regeneration,[245] which was demonstrated by the inaugural International Garden Festival of 1984 and the securing of the Albert Dock for the 'Tate in the North' scheme. The International Garden Festival in Liverpool, which was followed by National Garden Festivals in Stoke-on-Trent (1986), Glasgow (1988), Gateshead (1990) and Ebbw Vale (1992), ran from May–October 1984 and transformed a derelict former dockland site with sculpted gardens and public artworks.[246] The Albert Dock regeneration, in contrast, was a long-term redevelopment strategy that had its roots in 1979 when plans were laid for the Tate organisation to open a gallery outside London, with the main contenders being Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Manchester, with Liverpool being the last city to be visited by Tate's then Director, Alan Bowness. Only weeks after the Toxteth riots of 1981, however, the decision to open 'Tate in the North' at the derelict Albert Dock was announced,[247] and Richard J. Williams suggests that it was the money made available by the MDC for the Albert Dock scheme, a total of £42million, which swayed the decision in Liverpool's favour.[248]

Fig. 1.2.8 Colonnaded walkway at the Albert Dock, 1981

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[245] Parkinson, M. and Bianchini, F. (1993), "Liverpool: a Tale of Missed Opportunities?" in *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*, eds. F. Bianchini and M. Parkinson, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, pp.155-177 (p.160)
[246] See Connelly 2007; Merseyside Development Corporation 1998
[247] See Harris 2008
[248] Williams (2004), *The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century*, p.112. See Merseyside Development Corporation 1998

Fig. 1.2.9 Colonnaded walkway at the Albert Dock, 2012

Alongside the work of the MDC, Merseyside County Council published *An Arts and Cultural Industries Strategy for Liverpool* (1987) which had six broad aims and, crucially, placed arts and culture high on the agenda for regeneration. These aims were:

1. To support arts activities which maintain the city centre's regional role and to help to retain and develop local artistic talent, while enabling residents to experience the best of contemporary and traditional arts
2. To support the staging of a major annual arts festival which combined the best of the Liverpool experience with the best that other cities offered
3. To maximise the job creation potential of the arts and cultural industries, by preparing an audit of council resources which could help local arts and business organisations, by developing facilities which could make training, education, distribution and marketing functions available to arts organisation, and by supporting training schemes which provided key arts-related skills
4. To expand local and external markets for locally generated artistic and cultural material
5. To ensure that major arts facilities and events are accessible to all and to support the development of community arts
6. To carry out environmental improvement programmes in the vicinity of major arts attractions and on routes frequently used by large numbers of arts customers[249]

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[249] Parkinson and Bianchini (1993), "Liverpool: a Tale of Missed Opportunities?," pp.163-164

This commitment to arts and culture partly explains why the two projects undertaken by the MDC, arguably the most successful in terms of publicity and tourism, not only reaffirmed the importance of Liverpool's contemporary art scene, explored below, but also ensured continued interest from the capital, as London-based Tate became a key stakeholder in the city.

1.2.3 Context: Art

Fluxus and the Birth of Media Art

As indicated in Section 1.1.3, the history of media art, whilst largely contained within the last fifty years, has roots that stretch back to the end of the nineteenth century. Today, media artists still apply film and photography technologies to create art, although now generally in a digital format, but whilst these art forms were not necessarily accepted within the mainstream art canons of the early twentieth century, they did form part of the avant-garde at this time.[250] It was during the interwar period that the main shift in art attitudes took place, and by the 1960s, as technology began to infiltrate more elements of society, the Fluxus network emerged which, whilst remaining relatively undefined throughout its own history, introduced many of the practices that now exist within media art. Fluxus was a loosely defined group of international artists who saw the network as one of many means of presenting their work, and its relative longevity has been attributed by some writers to its experimental origins, although it was "little more than a name and a public face" for a practice that had long since existed.[251] Along with other more mainstream art practices, these artists continued the move started by the Dadaists in the early twentieth century which pushed the boundaries of art away from production for commercial sale and, arguably, redefined what was meant by the concept of *art*. Dadaism introduced new techniques to art production, and made an overt statement that rejected the attitudes of the traditional art world, having been "born of a need for independence, of a distrust toward unity."[252]

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[250] Manovich (2001), *The Language of New Media*, p.23; Pooke, G. (2011), *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction,* London and New York: Routledge, p.186
[251] Higgins, H. (2002), *Fluxus Experience,* Berkeley: University of CA Press, p.1. See also Dezeuze 2006
[252] Tzara, T. (2011), *Dada Manifesto 1918* (Online). See also Hughes 1991

One leading figure within Dadaism was artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), and his *readymades* contributed to the emergence of conceptual artists that could "turn their attention to the representational systems that classify objects, people and places"[253] by using mixed media within their work.

Fig. 1.2.10 One of Marcel Duchamp's readymades, *Fountain* (1917)

His rejection of traditional aesthetic values can be seen as heavily influential in the development of media art practice,[254] and through this, strong links were forged between art, innovation and technology. Duchamp also provided a bridge between Fluxus and its predecessors through his friendship with John Cage (1912-1992), an experimental composer who went on to work with many of Fluxus' main protagonists.[255]   Although primarily a composer, Cage's artistic work is considered to have had a profound effect on the emerging digital culture,[256] and it was his musical composition class at the New School for Social Research in New York, alongside Karlheinz Stockhausen's similar course in Darmstadt, Germany, that formed two centre-points of the Fluxus network.[257]   That the network originated in musical composition demonstrates the breadth of interest within

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[253] Elwes, C. (2005), *Video Art: A Guided Tour,* London: I.B.Tauris, p.23
[254] ibid.; Pooke and Newall (2008), *Art History: The Basics*, p.175; Rush, M. (2005), *New Media in Art,* London: Thames and Hudson, p.82
[255] Hopkins, D. (2006), "Re-Thinking the 'Duchamp Effect'" in *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945*, ed. A. Jones, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp.145-163 (p.147); Meigh-Andrews, C. (2006), *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function,* Oxford and New York: Berg, p.99
[256] Gere, C. (2002), *Digital Culture,* London: Reaktion Books, p.77
[257] Higgins (2002), *Fluxus Experience*, p.1

Fluxus, and the artists' effectiveness can be seen as a consequence of their "accessibility, *ad hoc* attitudes, and ever-present humour."[258]

Fig. 1.2.11 Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, *Reunion* (1968)

Defining the nature of the work produced by Fluxus artists, such as German performance artist Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), American artist Ken Friedman (b.1949) and avant-garde Japanese artist Yoko Ono (b.1933), is somewhat difficult as many had only a loose affiliation with the group, as well as long and diverse careers which transcended a range of different modes of expression. Fluxus was united by certain factors, however, and the artworks were often performance pieces which required interactivity from the viewer and situated the audience within the piece, and alongside the artist.[259] This signalled a significant shift in the way that art consumption took place both at artistic performances and later in the gallery, and the network-like structure of Fluxus ensured that artists with similar ideas and aims were widely dispersed around the world when it was at its peak. This was aided by certain artists becoming internationally renowned, and one of Fluxus' key members, Nam June Paik (1932–2006), was an early student of Stockhausen and went on to collaborate with Cage. He was, first and foremost, a composer before starting to work as a visual artist,[260] and he began to use video in the late 1960s. He has been widely acknowledged as

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[258] Anderson, S. (1998), "Fluxus, Fluxion, Fluxshoe: The 1970s" in *The Fluxus Reader*, ed. K. Friedman, Chichester: Academy Editions, pp.22-30 (p.29)
[259] Gere (2002), *Digital Culture*, p.86
[260] Nam June Paik Studios (2000), *Biography* (Online)

a founding father of video art and, at a recent retrospective exhibition at Tate Liverpool and FACT, was described as "the inventor of media art."[261]

Fig. 1.2.12 Nam June Paik, *TV Buddha* (1974)

Fluxus artists were working at a time of significant social change, with the Cold War (approx. 1945–1990) between Paik's country of residence, the USA, and the USSR, and conflict in Vietnam (1955–1975), contributing to changing attitudes and technological innovation. Video technology had been developed by the US Military during the Vietnam War for surveillance purposes[262] and, emerging as it did during the social and political upheaval that accompanied this military action,[263] quickly established itself as a popular medium for the production of socially reactive artworks. Video artist Catherine Elwes writes that "video art was born at a time of high personal and political faith. Artists and activists alike believed that their actions could make a difference to society."[264] Although this statement could seem a little self-congratulatory, there is evidence to suggest that the component practices of media art were heavily influenced by societal changes caused by the social and sexual revolutions of the 1960s,[265] which culminated in the unrest of May

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[261] The Nam June Paik retrospective was presented by Tate Liverpool and FACT from 17 December 2010 to 13 March 2011. (Tate Liverpool (2011), *Past Exhibitions: Nam June Paik* (Online))

[262] Elwes (2005), *Video Art: A Guided Tour*, p.3

[263] Dixon, S. (2007), *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, p.88

[264] Elwes (2005), *Video Art: A Guided Tour*, p.5

[265] Dixon (2007), *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, p.88; Meigh-Andrews (2006), *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function*, p.59; Rush (2005), *New Media in Art*, p.36

1968.[266] This occurred only three years after Sony had launched their portable PortaPak video camera onto the commercial market in 1965, with Paik importing one into the USA the same year.[267]

Media Art in Britain

The main areas of Fluxus activity were in the USA, continental Europe and Japan, and it was not until 1968 that the first PortaPak video camera was imported into Britain by John Hopkins, a political activist and photographer. This year was an important landmark in the history of media art in Britain because it also saw the 'Cybernetic Serendipity' exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. The exhibition, subtitled 'The Computer and the Arts,' showcased over three hundred artists and engineers, and included "computer graphic and film animations, computer texts [and] music composed and played by computers," amongst other artworks.[268]
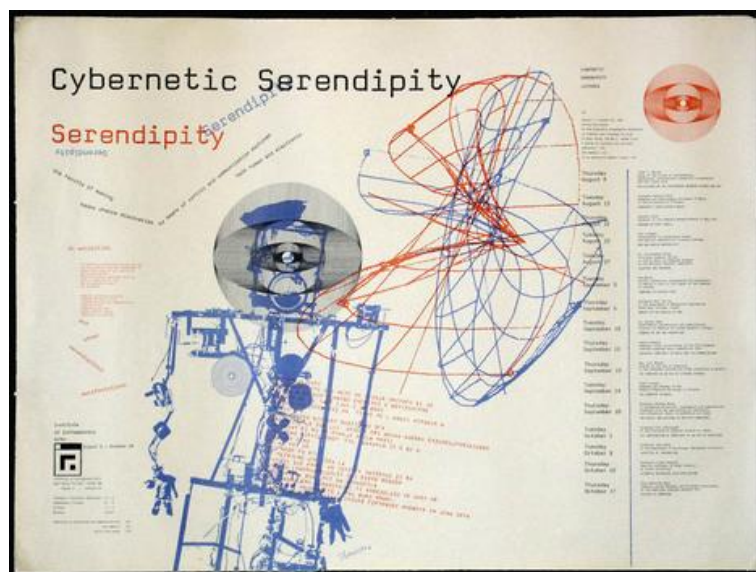
Fig. 1.2.13 Poster for Cybernetic Serendipity at the ICA, London, 1968

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[266] In May 1968, across numerous countries, there were social disturbances that saw "riots, demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, and many other actions" which demonstrated frustrations with the class and gender politics of the time, as well as questioning "the nature of capitalist and imperialist nation-states" (Harris (2001), *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction*, p.3)

[267] Cubitt, S. (1993), *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture,* Basingstoke: Macmillan, p.212. See also Meigh-Andrews 2006; Walker 1994; Schneider and Korot 1976

[268] Dixon (2007), *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, p.100

Cybernetic Serendipity successfully captured "a snapshot of art, entertainment, science and politics"[269] at a specific moment in time, and today can be seen as a catalytic event in the history of British media art.[270] Furthermore, it was the first of several similar exhibitions to happen that year, with 'Computer and Visual Research' opening in Zagreb, Croatia, the day after Cybernetic Serendipity launched.[271] Jasia Reichardt, the ICA show's curator, identified the exhibition as a projection of how the future could look.

> Cybernetic Serendipity deals with possibilities rather than achievements, and in this sense it is prematurely optimistic. There are no heroic claims to be made because computers have so far neither revolutionised music, nor art, nor poetry, in the same way that they have revolutionised science.[272]

The impact that computer technology has had on everyday life could not have been fully comprehended in 1968, but Reichardt's view here seems somewhat prophetic.

Fig. 1.2.14 Exhibitions at Cybernetic Serendipity, ICA, London, 1968

Cybernetic Serendipity provides a slightly skewed view of what was happening in media art in Britain during the 1960s, however, as its focus was solely on computers and art. It is important to note, therefore, that although not developing as rapidly as in the USA, other changes were taking place. As momentum gathered around different technologies and their application in art production, artist groups and organisations began to emerge, and by

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[269] Usselmann, R. (2003), "The Dilemma of Media Art: Cybernetic Serendipity at the ICA London," *LEONARDO,* vol.36, no.5, pp.389-396 (p.392)
[270] Gere, C. (2008), "Introduction" in *White Heat Cold Logic: British Computer Art 1960-1980*, eds. P. Brown et al, Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, pp. 1-7 (p.4). See also McGregor 2008
[271] Reichardt 2008
[272] Reichardt, J. (1968), "Introduction" in *Cybernetic Serendipity: The Computer and the Arts*, ed. J. Reichardt, London: Studio International, pp. 5-7, (p.5)

the 1970s art schools were offering courses that stretched beyond the more conventional options of painting and sculpture. It would be impossible to list the range of media art activities happening during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and they varied from one-off film screenings to festivals and from exhibitions to art school courses.[273] Many influential groups of media artists and art agencies emerged at this time, and of particular note here are the London Filmmakers Co-operative (LFMC), founded in 1966, London Video Arts (LVA), founded in 1976 and the Film and Video Umbrella (FVU), founded in 1983.[274] As their names suggest, each of these groups had specific interests, with the LFMC being a film production and screening service, whereas the LVA intended to promote, distribute and exhibit video art, and the FVU, supported financially by the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), was to provide a touring service for both film and video.[275] They demonstrate that, whilst all being London-based, there was a gathering momentum and interest in emerging media art, and the speed of this momentum increased as art school programmes also expanded.

Catherine Mason highlights the importance of the role of arts educational institutions in the development of British computer arts[276] and her analysis can be applied more broadly. As such, the 1970s and 1980s saw rising levels of interest from arts funders.

> By the early 1970s, the major route into computer arts was through a select number of art schools. These provided not only education and training but, in some cases, career incubation, employment, research facilities, and networking opportunities.[277]

Her analysis could also be extended to other forms of media art which, by contrast to their more traditional counterparts, required access to expensive technology. Greater access and more money was available to artists, art agencies and art schools, and this growing interest was demonstrated by the launch of Channel Four on terrestrial television. The

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[273] For more information, see Lux Online 2005a

[274] The LFMC and LVA amalgamated in 2002, and formed *Lux: Artists Moving Image*, based at the Lux Centre which had opened in 1997 (Lux (2011), *About Lux* (Online))

[275] For further detail on the histories of these organisations, see individual entries on Lux Online 2005a

[276] Mason, C. (2008), "The Routes toward British Computer Arts: The Role of Cultural Institutions in the Pioneering Period" in *White Heat Cold Logic: British Computer Art 1960-1980*, eds. P. Brown et al, Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, pp.245-264 (p.245). See also Walker 1994

[277] ibid., p.255

Independent Filmmakers Alliance, which had strong links with the LFMC,[278] was instrumental in the conception of a television channel that would champion "new images, new sounds [and] new voices" and, crucially, bring them into the living rooms of Britain.[279]

Although these activities were primarily London-based, some of the new voices were heard further afield, and the 'Filmaktion' event at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in June 1973 was an *expanded cinema* exhibition of the contemporary work of the LFMC.

Fig. 1.2.15 Poster for Filmaktion at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1973

According to the programme notes from a similar exhibition at Arnolfini, Bristol in 1976, expanded cinema can be understood as an art form that "combines the visual power of film

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[278] See Harvey 1982; Lambert 1982

[279] Harvey, S. (1982), "New Images for Old? Channel Four and Independent Film" in *What's this Channel Four: An Alternative Report*, eds. S. Blanchard and D. Morley, London: Comedia Publishing Group, pp.157-162 (p.157)

with the preoccupations of the other visual art forms"[280] and, as such, it asserted the place of film and video art within the gallery. The context of the viewing of an expanded cinema artwork is relevant to the work itself, and at this time there was a strong presence of media artists in Liverpool, including Malcolm le Grice and William Raban.[281] Furthermore, in the broader context of the host city outlined above, the works shown at Filmaktion represented a union of politics and art that:

> Engaged a critique of mainstream cinema at the level of film's actual image-making processes, rejecting the conventions of cinematic narrative and concentrating on the specific materials and processes used in filmmaking which became the main shape and content of the film.[282]

The exhibition "radically realign[ed] the possibilities and potentials for how the cinematic viewing space might be experienced,"[283] and its positioning in one of Liverpool's most prestigious art galleries can be seen as representative of the contemporary visual arts scene that was present in the city at that time.

Funding Media Art

As suggested above, the availability of funding is integral to the development of any art practice, and since the end of the Second World War, this had been controlled, with the exception of private funding, by the ACGB, latterly Arts Council England (ACE). The ACGB was founded in 1946 in the same government as the National Health Service and the Education Act, and has, therefore, often been associated with the welfare state.[284] The ACGB replaced the wartime Committee for the Encouragement of Music and Arts, and its Chairman, economist John Maynard Keynes became the first Chairman of the ACGB,

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[280] Arnolfini (1976), *Expanded Cinema 1st-10th April* (Online)

[281] Reynolds, L. (2005), *Luxonline Histories: 1970-1979* (Online)

[282] Reynolds, L. (2007), "Filmaktion: New Directions in Film-Art" in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, eds. C. Grunenberg and R. Knifton, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.157-168 (p.158)

[283] ibid. p.165

[284] Hewison (1995), *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics Since 1940*, p.29; Brighton, A. (1999), "Toward a Command Culture: New Labour's Cultural Policy and Soviet Socialist Realism," *Critical Quarterly,* vol.41, no.3, pp.24-34 (p.24); Francis, R. (2004), "Managing Disappointment: Arts Policy, Funding and the Social Inclusion Agenda" in *Art, Money, Parties: New Institutions in the Political Economy of Contemporary Art*, ed. J. Harris, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.133-161 (p.147)

although he died shortly after it was launched. The ACGB firmly established arts and culture as a "permanent national responsibility,"[285] and although its funds are allocated by the government, it claims to operate with autonomy, or at least at arm's length.[286]

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a period of significant change for the ACGB, and despite media art's growing importance since the 1960s, it was only in 1986 that the Film, Video and Broadcasting (FVB) department was created:

> In recognition…of the success achieved by the Council in forming partnerships with agencies in the broadcasting and audio-visual world, most notably co-funding arrangements with Channel Four television.[287]

That Channel Four was identified as the catalyst for this new department, rather than the media artworks that had been made during the previous twenty years, is a typical example of one of the main criticisms of the ACGB: that it was detached from the arts activities that were happening beyond the experience of the overwhelmingly London-based white, middle-class, male council members.[288] Criticisms of its centrality were addressed in 1990 when the ACGB was divided into ten Regional Art Boards (RAB), and again in 1994 when the organisation split into separate councils for England, Scotland and Wales. This saw the devolution of funds to individual regions, perhaps a cost-cutting strategy by the Conservative government, but also beneficial because it placed arts funding into the hands of local individuals.[289]

The new FVB department launched with eight objectives which clearly demonstrated a commitment from the ACGB, ahead of its major restructuring, to the emerging art forms it supported. These objectives were:

[285] Hewison (1995), *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics Since 1940*, p.29
[286] See Wyszorminski 2004; Brighton 1999; Hewison 1995; Pick 1991
[287] Arts Council of Great Britain (1987), *A Policy Statement from the Arts Council,* London: Arts Council of Great Britain, p.7
[288] Pick, J. (1991), *Vile Jelly: The Birth, Life and Lingering Death of the Arts Council of Great Britain,* Gringley-on-the-Hill: The Brynmill Press Ltd, p.14
[289] McGuigan (1996), *Culture and the Public Sphere*, p.106; Hewison (1995), *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics Since 1940*, p.254

1. To produce innovative films and videos about the arts, and to sell and distribute them to home and international markets
2. To act as an international distributor of arts films and videos by producers other than the Council
3. To provide financial support to artists working in film and video and to promote the exhibition and distribution of their work
4. To develop initiatives with television organisations to create new opportunities for artists
5. To develop the provision of educational material through the growth of video access libraries in regional arts centres and public libraries
6. To promote broader access to the arts through the development of home video and related distribution systems
7. To identify and, when appropriate, to help to fill gaps in provision offered by the Council and other agencies, particularly in relation to opportunities provided by the new media
8. To make the recording of all major exhibitions and performances funded by the Council a regular, automatic event.[290]

This commitment was timely as it ensured that when restructuring took place in 1990, each RAB would have some money specifically earmarked for film and video works, although the FVB had been disbanded and absorbed into the Visual Arts department by 1998.[291] This could be seen as an indication of the integration of film and video into mainstream art practice and production, although whether it too served as an opportunity to simplify, and thus reduce, the potential areas for expenditure, is unclear.

1.2.4 Context: Institutions

The Role of Museums

In Section 1.1.4, the literature describes an environment of continual change that surrounded museums and galleries, from their initial development in the Victorian era to present day. By the middle of the twentieth century, museums functioned as educational institutions, and were largely given freedom to espouse their own ideas without significant

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[290] Arts Council of Great Britain (1987), *A Policy Statement from the Arts Council,* p.7
[291] The precise date of the disbandment of the FVB is unclear, but its future was brought into question in the ACE's Annual Report for 1996/1997 and was absent from their Annual Report for 1998 (see Arts Council of England 1998; Arts Council of England 1997)

challenge.[292] As the century drew to a close, however, arts and cultural policies facilitated considerable change, with critics suggesting that:

> Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government (1979–90) radically changed the relationship between government, culture and education. Her attack on public services led to a number being privatised; others suffered severely reduced levels of public funding and were scrutinised by the National Audit Office, set up in 1983 to check that there was evident value for taxpayers' money.[293]

The challenge, then, was for the cultural sector to devise a means of measuring value that would ensure access to diminishing public funds, and this led to both government and non-governmental funders requiring museums and galleries to conduct audience surveys that would quantitatively measure their success. Certain criteria began to be measured in order to justify the activities of art organisations[294] and, as a consequence, the focus of museums began to shift, with their operations becoming increasingly corporate.

The museum's role evolved to include the provision of a space which encourages, and includes, those who were traditionally excluded from cultural institutions through educational and social programmes. In 1992, Patrick J. Boylan suggested that museums had four primary objectives ahead of the new millennium, ranging from improved quality of service and conservation to "representing the views, needs and values of the museum community and its users to national and local government."[295] These objectives were supported by the ACGB in 1993, with publication of *A Creative Future*,[296] its future plan for the arts in Britain. Here, the ACGB proposed the following ten-point plan which asserted the importance of placing the community at the centre of arts provision, for mutual benefit, and the promotion of an open, diverse and educative system.

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[292] Reeve, J. and Woollard, V. (2006), "Influences on Museum Practice" in *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. C. Lang et al, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.5-17 (p.5)

[293] Lang, C. et al (2006), "The Impact of Government Policy" in *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. C. Lang et al, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.19-28 (p.24)

[294] Buckingham, D. and Jones, K. (2001), "New Labour's Cultural Turn: Some Tensions in Contemporary Education and Cultural Policy," *Journal of Educational Policy,* vol.16, no.1, pp.1-14 (pp.3-4)

[295] Boylan (1992), "Museums 2000 and the Future of Museums," p.3

[296] See Arts Council of Great Britain 1993

1. The arts, crafts and media are central to the lives of individuals and the well-being of communities. They offer inspiration, pleasure and comfort; and help people to criticise and celebrate society and understand their relationship to it
2. Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the arts both as participant and as audience member
3. Education is at the heart of enjoying and understanding the arts and media. It is fundamental to a vital and varied culture
4. Quality is the pre-eminent criterion for public funding of the arts. Quality is a broad term, encompassing such concepts as fitness for purpose. Work of high quality and originality may be produced in any form, at any scale and from any cultural aesthetic or community
5. Diversity and variety in the arts and media are valuable in themselves and as a reflection of contemporary life
6. It is imperative that the arts of the past be renewed and kept alive
7. The arts and media should be viewed in an international as well as a local, regional and national context
8. Public funding of the arts and media, in people, buildings and equipment, is an investment. Its dividends are creativity, inspiration, civic pride and personal pleasure and confidence, as well as economic benefit
9. The arts should be generally available throughout the country
10. The arts and media funding system is accountable to the public through Parliament. It should seek to represent, be advised by and deserve the trust of the arts community[297]

Each of these principles was supported by an aim from the ACGB to ensure that this new vision of the future was delivered, and marked a commitment to ensuring quality, value for money and accountability in a publicly-funded industry. This attitudinal shift had to challenge an entrenched hierarchy within the sphere of cultural institutions, however, and whilst a fundamental change could be seen to be starting by the early 1990s, it was not until the New Labour government's establishment of the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1997 that wholesale change was in evidence. As documented previously, this primarily manifested itself in the provision of a more structured educational service by museums and galleries, although whilst the DCMS abolished admission fees and generously supported national institutions, they were treated primarily as tourist attractions with a gaze far beyond their local environment. Consequently, it is arguably in local museums that the ACGB's ten-point plan can be seen to have been embraced, with smaller organisations

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[297] Arts Council of Great Britain (1993), *A Creative Future: The Way Forward for the Arts, Crafts and Media in England,* London: HMSO, pp.27-29

becoming pioneers of widening participation and more successfully establishing a dialogue with their local communities.[298]

The Growing Importance of Media

In *A Creative Future* (1993), the ACGB refer not only to the arts, but also to media, an element of artistic process and production that had fallen within their remit in 1986 when the FVB department was established.[299] This commitment to media, and the changing role of museums through the integration of participative practices and a demand for interactivity, saw a greater need for its integration into gallery spaces. Interactivity through computer technology has become commonplace in contemporary society, and as museums have begun to explore online exhibitions through their websites, media technologies within the gallery is a logical progression. Furthermore, a greater level of interest in media art which uses new technologies in its production, and often requires similar technology for its display, necessitates the transformation of museums into media environments that audiences can be immersed in, just as they are immersed in media in everyday life. This was a continuation of the philosophy espoused by Duchamp that audiences have a role in "completing the art work,"[300] and as media becomes more sophisticated, and media artists push the boundaries of technology, more suitable display techniques need to be investigated.

Although media displays and computer technology are relatively commonplace in museums and galleries today, the 1990s saw the emergence of a new type of cultural institution, the media centre, which combines the display functions of galleries with other media services – from training facilities to internet cafés and cinema screens. Charlie Gere attributes the demand for media centres to the advent of the Internet, which "led to an efflorescence of art using and engaging with new media and technology,"[301] and a demand from the public to have access to the new interface. The emergence of media centres to provide this

[298] Tlili et al (2007), "New Labour's Socially Responsible Museum: Roles, Functions and Greater Expectations," p.270
[299] See Arts Council of Great Britain 1993
[300] Rush (2005), *New Media in Art*, p.160
[301] Gere (2002), *Digital Culture*, pp.110-111

service was influenced by the German government's decision to support a centre for art and media in 1988, and thus facilitating the development of a media centre which has become a model for other organisations. The Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) opened in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1997,[302] and has taken on the role of gallery, social space and a place where artists can historicise and discuss "the critical subdivisions within the field" of media art.[303] Despite numerous other media centres emerging since ZKM opened, there is very little critical examination of their role in contrast to museums and galleries, and with a number of media centres having opened in Britain, they must be seen as playing a crucial role in Britain's cultural complexion, both as an evolution of the museum model, but also as an entity in their own right.

1.2.5 Context: Liverpool's Art Institutions

The socio-economic, political and cultural context outlined above had a direct bearing on Liverpool, and the city's economic growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was an important base for its physical and cultural development. After the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in 1807, there was a conscious effort to try to distance the city from the image of "barbarism, philistinism and lack of civilised culture" that prevailed.[304] Accompanied by an aspiration for polite society in Liverpool, and a number of wealthy men keen, and financially able, to facilitate this, the city's public buildings – the Town Hall, St George's Hall and the William Brown Group[305] – were constructed to demonstrate the city's success, expansion and cultural sophistication.[306]

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[302] Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (2012a)*, About the ZKM* (Online)

[303] Graham and Cook (2010), *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media*, p.190

[304] Belchem, J. and Biggs, B. (2011b), "Introduction: A Democratic Promenade" in *Liverpool: City of Radicals*, eds. J. Belchem and B. Biggs, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.1-13 (p.2)

[305] The construction of these buildings took place as follows: Liverpool Town Hall (1749-1754); St George's Hall, a concert hall and assembly rooms (1841-1854); and the William Brown Group, including the Museum, Library and Walker Art Gallery (1847-1860). Extensions to the William Brown Group have been completed in subsequent years.

[306] See Belchem and Biggs 2011a; Sharples 2004; Stobart 2002

Fig. 1.2.16 Photograph of St George's Plateau, c.1890-1900

The same era saw the foundation of intellectual groups and art collections, some of which remain in the city today. The most notable collection was that of lawyer and politician William Roscoe (1753–1831), comprising 37 paintings which were acquired by the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1819.[307] These paintings can be found today at the Walker Art Gallery, which opened in 1873 and has, as the city's municipal art gallery, been an influential and important component of Liverpool's arts and cultural scene.

As documented in Section 1.2.3, the Walker Art Gallery was the site of the Filmaktion exhibition in 1973, and whilst this somewhat obscure event seems to be a significant departure from the gallery's permanent collection, the Walker's link with contemporary art is an important factor in Liverpool's cultural history. In 1957, local businessman John Moores, founder of Littlewoods, the Football Pools, Catalogues and Chain Store conglomerate, sponsored a biennial contemporary painting competition, the John Moores Painting Prize, which still runs today, despite initially being intended as a one-off event.[308] The Moores family have been essential private funders of Liverpool's art scene,[309] and the John Moores Painting Prize, alongside the Liverpool College of Art, helped to create a

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[307] Walker Art Gallery (2012a), *History of the John Moores Exhibition* (Online)

[308] Walker Art Gallery (2012b), *The Origins of the Collection, 1819-1871* (Online)

[309] In addition to the John Moores Painting Prize, John Moores' son established the Peter Moores Projects which were biennial contemporary art exhibitions that ran in the 1970s and 1980s and John Moores' great-nephew, James Moores, financed the first Liverpool Biennial, and established the now defunct A Foundation.

vibrant artistic environment.[310] Crucially, local talent was promoted, and in the first five John Moores Painting Prize competitions, from 1957–1965, nineteen Liverpool-based artists exhibited work alongside renowned artists such as Jack Smith, who won the first competition, and David Hockney, who won in 1967.[311]

(L) **Fig. 1.2.17** Jack Smith, *Creation and Crucifixion* (1957), John Moores Painting Prize winner, 1957

(R) **Fig. 1.2.18** David Hockney, *Peter Getting Out Of Nick's Pool* (1966), John Moores Painting Prize winner, 1967

Throughout the following decade, Liverpool enjoyed a cultural renaissance which saw artists moving to a city with cheap rent and a vibrant art community, and the 1960s saw the emergence of groups such as the Liverpool Poets, Roger McGough, Brian Patten and Adrian Henri, as well as being the zenith of the Merseybeat pop music scene. Now associated almost entirely with The Beatles, more than eighty Merseybeat bands and artists released singles during the 1960s,[312] and the city appeared to be "at the heart of a global pop cultural revolution."[313]

However, this was short lived, and as economic difficulties hit their peak in the 1980s, the city's cultural scene changed again. In 1982 the city and its problems occupied a new

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[310] See Grunenberg and Knifton 2007a

[311] Pih, D. (2007), "Liverpool's Left Bank" in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, eds. C. Grunenberg and R. Knifton, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.113-134 (p.118)

[312] Leigh, S. (2004), *Twist and Shout: Merseybeat, The Cavern, The Star-Club and The Beatles,* Liverpool: Nirvana Books, pp.199-231

[313] Grunenberg and Knifton (2007b), "The Crater of the Volcano: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde," p.24

cultural sphere, with Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff*, a television drama that tackled the gritty reality of working class struggles in Liverpool during the Thatcher era,[314] airing from October that year, and television soap *Brookside* launching the following month. These television programmes provided media coverage of Liverpool's hardships, although they were generally more sympathetic than the national press, and they ensured that the city's cultural heritage remained visible, albeit 'warts and all.'

Fig. 1.2.19 The cast of Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982)

The 1980s was also a difficult period for Liverpool's museums and galleries, as the abolition of the Merseyside County Council in 1985 left their future uncertain. Having been founded by the Local Government Act 1972,[315] Merseyside County Council was responsible for regional services, including arts and culture, and its dissolution in the Local Government Act 1985[316] led to the creation of National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGM), now National Museums Liverpool (NML). This removed seven of the city's cultural institutions from local control,[317] which ensured their future would be relatively secure under the stewardship of national government.[318] NML today represents the largest number of national museums and galleries outside London, and these museums are

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[314] British Film Institute (2010), Boys from the Blackstuff (Online)

[315] Great Britain (1972), *Local Government Act 1972*, London: The Stationery Office

[316] Great Britain (1985), *Local Government Act 1985*, London: The Stationery Office

[317] These institutions were the Museum of Liverpool, World Museum, Walker Art Gallery, Merseyside Maritime Museum, International Slavery Museum, Lady Lever Art Gallery (Port Sunlight), and Sudley House (Aigburth) (National Museums Liverpool (2012), *Liverpool Museums* (Online))

[318] O'Brien, D. and Miles, S. (2010), "Cultural Policy as Rhetoric and Reality: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Making in the Peripheral North of England," *Cultural Trends,* vol.19, no.1-2, pp.3-13 (p.10). See also Biggs 2009b

supported by many other arts and cultural institutions and events throughout the year.[319] The most notable event in the 1980s, however, was the decision to house the Tate's satellite gallery in Liverpool, effectively an additional national gallery which had a specific focus on contemporary art. Following on from the city's strong association with contemporary art through the Liverpool College of Art and the John Moores Painting Prize, the decision to situate the Tate gallery in the city was understandable, although the timing of the decision was politically awkward. As explained in Section 1.2.2, the decision was made in the aftermath of the Toxteth riots, and with race being an issue in this period of unrest, the decision to house an art collection built from the wealth of a sugar merchant in a warehouse on the docks of Britain's most illustrious slave trading port was controversial.[320] Furthermore, with acute socio-economic problems in the city, a London-based art gallery was not seen as a suitable remedy by local residents, although with hindsight the decision can be seen to have made "a positive contribution not only from a regionalist perspective, but from an internationalist one too,"[321] to the city's art scene. This is because the presence of an international brand in Liverpool firmly established the city as having one of "the best and most diverse offers in the visual arts in the UK and internationally,"[322] despite the city's relatively diminutive size, and it is upon this foundation that Liverpool's current art organisations have developed.

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[319] See Biggs 2011

[320] Williams (2004), *The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century*, p.127

[321] Biggs, L. (2009a), "FACT: A Liverpool Invention" in *We Are The Real-Time Experiment*, ed. Liverpool: FACT and Liverpool University Press, pp.12-15 (p.14)

[322] Grunenberg and Knifton (2007b), "The Crater of the Volcano: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde," p.37

2.   FACT's Sub-Brands

2.1 Art: Video Positive

> *Any reading of biennials implicates a larger network of institutions, cultural policies, art markets, and practices, making these large-scale events useful optics through which to examine the consequences of contemporary history and culture at large.*[323]

2.1.1 Art Festivals

The term *festival* can be used to describe many different activities and, as "special events," they are governed by a desire to promote a chosen art form or cultural activity.[324] Howard Hughes identifies festivals as an opportunity for communities to access different activities and to enable enthusiasts to gather and share ideas in one place.[325] In the post-war era, this style of arts event became increasingly common, with the Festival of Britain in 1951, a centenary celebration of the Great Exhibition, refining the idea of a festival.

(L) Fig. 2.1.1 Postcard of London's Southbank during the Festival of Britain, 1951

(R) Fig. 2.1.2 Poster for the Festival of Britain, 1951

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[323] Vanderlinden, B. and Filipovic, E. (2005), "Introduction" in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-wall Europe*, eds. B. Vanderlinden and E. Filipovic, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, pp.13-17 (p.14)

[324] Hughes, H. (2000), *Arts, Entertainment and Tourism,* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, p.89

[325] ibid., p.90

The Festival of Britain was used as an "invigorating tonic" after the "exasperations and frustrations of the immediate post-war period,"[326] and its success led to festivals becoming a popular aspect of Britain's cultural offer, although their frequency greatly increased as the century progressed and questions began to be raised about "whether the fashion for festivals had gone too far."[327] The most notable growth in arts festivals took place in the 1980s,[328] and a 1992 report stated that more than 500 festivals took place across the country every year.[329] This growth can be seen as a reflection of the amount of funding that was made available at this time for such events, with almost half of the arts festivals of the 1980s receiving financial support from their Regional Art Board (RAB).[330] Author of the report, Heather Rolfe, states that funding bodies saw festivals as an opportunity to "provide a 'focus' for the arts which can encourage attendance and involvement,"[331] although by 1993 the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) was already expressing some concerns about arts festivals.

> Festivals can be among the best or the worst forms of arts provision. Some are life-enhancing; others, utterly lifeless. At their best, festivals are occasions for disruption, surprise and celebration. They bring aspects of the arts to the attention of people who might otherwise not know or care about them, and provide an opportunity for a community to come together and to promote its name and image more widely.[332]

Although the majority of arts festivals in the 1980s and early 1990s were annual events,[333] in the global art world a model of biennials had emerged that saw festivals lasting several weeks and occurring on a two-yearly basis. The Venice Biennale is the most renowned contemporary art biennial, having launched in 1895 and expanded to include a film festival in 1932.[334] Biennials of this nature tend to have a broader field of influence, often with an international gaze demonstrated through their commissions and audiences, but it is

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[326] White, E.W. (1975), *The Arts Council of Great Britain,* London: Davis Poynter, p.220
[327] ibid., p.223
[328] Rolfe, H. (1992), *Arts Festivals in the UK,* London: Policy Studies Institute, p.9
[329] ibid., p.1
[330] ibid., p.59
[331] ibid., p.13
[332] Arts Council of Great Britain (1993), *A Creative Future: The Way Forward for the Arts, Crafts and Media in England*, p.136
[333] Rolfe (1992), *Arts Festivals in the UK*, p.10
[334] Venice Biennale (2010)*, La Biennale* (Online)

primarily in their ambition that they differ from local festivals. Hanru suggests that international biennials have:

> Cultural and geopolitical ambitions. They seek to be nationally and even internationally significant, by putting forward particular and supposedly incomparable local characteristics, what we might call 'locality.' Ideally, the concept of locality should be culturally related to the local tradition but innovative and open to international exchanges.[335]

Achieving locality, or rather relevance to it, whilst also remaining internationally important, is a delicate balancing act for festival organisers, and this is particularly important when launching an event that specialises in less mainstream art practices. Using a festival to introduce something new to a local community can mean that it is more difficult to attract and maintain audiences, and the National Independent Video Festival (NIVF), which was held in Bracknell, Berkshire from 1981–1988, demonstrates this.[336] The NIVF was the most notable festival of video art at the time of Merseyside Moviola's emergence, and being situated near London, where the majority of practicing video artists worked at the time, led to it being seen as an inward-looking event with audiences that primarily comprised those already working in the field.[337]

Fig. 2.1.3 Poster for the National Independent Video Festival, 1981

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[335] Hanru, H. (2005), "Towards a New Locality: Biennials and 'Global Art'" in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-wall Europe*, eds. B. Vanderlinden and E. Filipovic, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, pp.57-62 (p.57)
[336] Lux Online (2005b), *Histories 1980-1989* (Online)
[337] Gillman, C. (Director, Dundee Contemporary Arts, former Lead Artist and Associate Director, FACT), interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

The NIVF was, however, one of a "flurry of video art festivals that emerged throughout mainland Europe in the mid to late eighties,"[338] and in Linz, Austria the Ars Electronica (Ars) festival, which launched in 1979, was gathering both momentum and prestige during the 1980s. Ars had launched as a biennial festival but became an annual event in 1986 and, as an interdisciplinary festival based around the themes of art, science and technology, it had a broader scope than the NIVF.[339]

Although Ars was thriving by the start of the 1990s, the conclusion of the final NIVF in 1988 left a gap in Britain's cultural offer as video had become increasingly popular as a medium but it had not yet infiltrated the gallery system. The growing interest in media art practices throughout the 1980s indicated a demand for a festival of video art, and one which looked to a public that was still unable to gain access to these artworks through more conventional means. Consequently, a proposal for a video art festival was in a strong position to attract funding, particularly in a city that had benefitted from increasing amounts of arts funding as part of the MDC's culture-led regeneration agenda. The most high profile cultural event in Liverpool at this time had been the International Garden Festival in 1984 which, having been a great success as a tourist attraction, signalled a changing approach to culture in the city. This led to a number of festivals emerging in Liverpool, such as the annual Visionfest, a visual arts festival that emerged from the artists' studios in the area.[340] Liverpool, whilst not unusual in being swept along in the surge of arts festivals in the 1980s, had a cultural framework that could create and support a range of events, and the larger network of cultural institutions required for the delivery of biennials laid strong foundations for the work of Moviola from 1989.

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[338] Berg, E. (2000b), "Preface" in *The Other Side of Zero: Video Positive 2000 Catalogue*, ed. E. Berg, Liverpool: FACT, pp.4-5, (p.4)

[339] Ars Electronica (2012d), *History* (Online)

[340] Parkinson and Bianchini (1993), "Liverpool: a Tale of Missed Opportunities?," p.170; Biggs, B. (2007), "Welcome to the Pleasure Dome: Art in Liverpool 1988-1999" in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, eds. C. Grunenberg and R. Knifton, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.183-202 (p.188); Biggs, L. (2009b), "Individuals and Institutions in Dialogue" in *Art in a City Revisited*, eds. B. Biggs and J. Sheldon, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.27-51 (p.47). See also Lorente 2000

2.1.2 A History of Video Positive

In 1989 Moviola launched the Video Positive festivals which were held in the city until 2000. A biennial event, with the exception of the last festival which was held three years after its predecessor to coincide with the new millennium, there were six festivals in total (1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 2000), and they were founded on the same basic premise of celebrating "the creative, challenging and exciting work produced by video and electronic media artists worldwide,"[341] although each iteration differed in scale and scope. The inaugural festival, Video Positive 1989, was held across Merseyside, those in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2000 were confined to Liverpool city centre, and Video Positive 1997 was spread across Liverpool and neighbouring Manchester.

In the *Factors* (2003) publications, a series of short essays published by FACT on the organisation's history, FACT's then Director, Eddie Berg, tells a story of conceiving the idea for Video Positive and approaching the ACGB for financial support, only to be told that he would need to work with a more experienced curator on the project to secure funding.[342] Consequently, Steve Littman, a London-based video artist,[343] got involved in the project and developed a concept that could be enhanced and supported by his international professional connections. Berg and Littman presented Video Positive not as a retrospective view of video art over the last twenty years, but as a celebration of current practices and a means of looking ahead to future developments in the genre.

> After 20 years or so of unprecedented development in image-making technologies and a decade of new innovations and practices among artists, it seems appropriate that we should hold a festival which celebrates video art today and takes a look at what we might expect to see in the 90s.[344]

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[341] Berg, E. and Littman, S. (1989), "Foreword" in *Video Positive '89 Catalogue*, ed. L. Haskel, Liverpool: Merseyside Moviola, pp.6, (p.6)
[342] Berg, E. (2003a), "Video Positive '89" in *Factor 1989*, ed. C. Doherty, Liverpool: FACT, p.9
[343]   *Video Positive '89 Sponsorship Package (1988)*, (Available: Rewind Archive, Dundee Contemporary Arts), p.1. See also Rewind (2012b), *Stephen Littman* (Online)
[344] Berg and Littman (1989), "Foreword," p.6

With this philosophy at its core, Video Positive 1989 launched in mid-February and ran for two weeks, with a number of exhibitions, events and critical discussions held at cultural institutions across Merseyside. Despite its focus being on an art form that was "still not accepted as a fine art practice...among much of the rest of the fine art world,"[345] the event attracted around 35,000 visitors.

Fig. 2.1.4 David Hall, *A Situation Envisaged: The Rite II (Cultural Eclipse)* (1989), Video Positive 1989

These audience figures suggest that Video Positive 1989 enjoyed reasonable success, but reflecting on the festival a decade later, Berg stated that the first festival had been flawed, as many of the decisions were made by a small staff of relatively inexperienced people, although it did provide a solid base from which the concept developed.[346]

Video Positive was pitched to funders as a biennial event, and in the aftermath of Video Positive 1989, Moviola compiled a list of recommendations for future iterations.[347] These included creating a development programme for the festival as a long-term project and to appoint a member of staff to fulfil this role. Moviola also proposed that the international

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[345] ibid.

[346] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.11. See also *Video Positive '89: A Report*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive), p.1

[347] *Video Positive '89: A Report*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive), pp.8-9

standing of the festival would need to be better established in order to locate Video Positive within a broader context than Liverpool, which Berg and Littman admitted was not, prior to Video Positive, a centre of video art.[348] However, they were also keen to better develop the community component of the festivals, and it was in this aspect that the most significant changes were made for Video Positive 1991. In 1990, a temporary post was funded to work with members of the Liverpool community to create a body of work that would be exhibited alongside the festival's artistic programme.[349] This focus on the Liverpool community was reinforced by the next three festivals, Video Positive 1991, 1993 and 1995, being concentrated on Liverpool city centre, with the majority of the exhibitions taking place there, and a greater emphasis on exhibiting in public areas rather than solely in museums and galleries. Consequently, whilst at its heart the festival remained "a celebration of an expanding ecology of work and creative endeavour,"[350] there was greater emphasis on commissioning new work produced by artists, as well as by members of the community.

Despite this realignment of priority, the format of the first four Video Positive festivals was similar in terms of scale and programming, although for each festival, the success of its predecessors led to greater opportunities for funding and sponsorship. However, in 1997, the year that Moviola rebranded as the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), the organisation reworked its institutional aims and was far more ambitious in its vision.[351] Video Positive 1997, subtitled 'Escaping Gravity,' reflected this shift and took place across both Liverpool and Manchester, with almost 200 artists' works exhibited,[352] and it was an attempt by FACT to unite two cities that had a long history of rivalry ahead of a future event, ISEA98,[353] which was also based on the same cross-city model.

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[348] Berg and Littman (1989), "Foreword," p.6
[349] For further information, see Section 2.2.2
[350] Berg, E. (1995), "Director's Preface" in *Video Positive '95 Catalogue*, ed. Moviola, Liverpool: Moviola, p.4 (p.4)
[351] See Section 3.1.2
[352] Bode, S. (2000), "The Other Side of Zero" in *The Other Side of Zero: Video Positive 2000 Catalogue*, ed. E. Berg, Liverpool: FACT, pp.6-9, (p.6)
[353] The International Symposium for the Electronic Arts (ISEA) is an annual event which combines a festival and conference, which supports a network of organisations and individuals working in the field, as artists, curators and academics, of electronic arts. (International Symposium for the Electronic Arts (2012), *History* (Online))

> Video Positive [19]97 – and to a lesser extent ISEA98 the following year – were both attempts to build a cultural partnership between Liverpool and Manchester. At the same time it was also an attempt to establish a dialogue between artists and artworks that emerged from the distinct domains of the art and new media worlds.[354]

The attempts to unite disparate entities, whether neighbouring cities or differing art forms, demonstrates the ambition of Moviola's vision, although Video Positive 1997 consequently struggled under the weight of its own programme, and curator Steven Bode stated that the festival had grown to such an extent that it only just avoided being overloaded.[355]

The difficulties of Video Positive 1997 led to the final Video Positive in 2000 being a significantly pared down series of events and exhibitions. In the festival catalogue, Bode stated that Video Positive 2000 "marks a deliberate break in [the] upward spiral, confining itself, in its core exhibition programme, to just three venues."[356] Video Positive 2000 was the final festival in the series, and although there is evidence in the archives that suggests FACT were intending to hold a Video Positive festival in 2002,[357] there are a number of indications that this was unlikely to occur. With hindsight, Video Positive 2000 was presented as deliberately "stripped-down"[358] and, as such, an antidote to the millennium celebrations. However, by the end of the 1990s the organisation was preoccupied by the FACT Centre project,[359] with building work commencing in 2000. Furthermore, a much larger city festival, the Liverpool Biennial, had launched in 1999, and having already impacted upon when Video Positive would be held,[360] FACT reviewed the prospects for its festival programme. The Liverpool Biennial is a two-yearly festival of contemporary art,[361] and as one of its options for Video Positive, FACT considered amalgamating its festival into the Liverpool Biennial programme. Other alternatives that were considered were

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[354] Berg, E. (2003c), "97/98: Two Tribes" in *Factor 1997*, ed. C. Doherty, Liverpool: FACT, pp.6-10 (p.8)
[355] Bode (2000), "The Other Side of Zero," p.6
[356] ibid.
[357] *Board Meeting Minutes, 22 May 2000*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)
[358] Berg, E. (2003d), "Video Positive 2000: Something Out of Nothing" in *Factor 2000,* ed. C. Doherty, Liverpool: FACT, pp.6-10 (p.9)
[359] See Section 3.2.2
[360] As a biennial project, there should have been a Video Positive festival in 1999, but instead there was an interval of three years between the fifth and sixth festivals.
[361] For more information, see Liverpool Biennial 2012

continuing to present Video Positive on the new two-yearly schedule, with the seventh festival proposed to coincide with the opening of the FACT Centre in Spring 2002, or a significant reworking of the model to transform Video Positive into a broader festival of moving image.[362] None of these three options was adopted, however, and a Video Positive festival simply did not occur again.

Nevertheless, throughout the 1990s and despite the changes that occurred during its history, Video Positive remained FACT's flagship event from 1989–2000[363] and formed the basis of the majority of the organisation's exhibition work. Subsequently, Video Positive has been acknowledged in Liverpool as a pioneering attempt to unite moving image with arts activities in the community,[364] regardless of the acknowledgement at the outset that the city was an unusual place to hold an international festival of video art. By taking place in Liverpool, however, Video Positive was a mirror for the "cultural and economic renaissance"[365] that had been signalled by the culture-led regeneration strategies that were introduced in the 1980s, and it situated itself at the forefront of media art developments at this time.

2.1.3 Funding Video Positive

Moviola was in its infancy when the Video Positive festivals first developed and, therefore, obtaining funding was of vital importance. With the core of video art activity being in London, and previous video art festivals also being located in the South East, a proposal to launch a new video art festival in Liverpool, a city that had attracted much negative publicity throughout the 1980s, added pressures on the process of securing funding. However, Liverpool had attracted significant levels of external funding throughout the 1980s for various cultural projects, and as outlined in Section 1.2.2, Merseyside County Council was keen to encourage arts festivals "which combined the best of the Liverpool

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[362] *Board Meeting Minutes, 22 May 2000*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)
[363] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.3
[364] Biggs, B. (2011), "Radical Art City?" in *Liverpool: City of Radicals*, eds. J. Belchem and B. Biggs, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.61-83 (p.77)
[365] Berg and Littman (1989), "Foreword," p.6

experience with the best that other cities offered."[366]   Consequently, with increasing amounts of funding available for festivals, the end of the 1980s was a good time to develop the model and in bypassing London, there was a somewhat alternative feel to the concept which suited the medium it was celebrating, especially in the context of a city with significant economic and social problems. Bypassing London also brought complications, however, as funding from the ACGB in London at the end of the 1980s was 6.3 times greater than average regional expenditure.[367]

Consequently, it was only with pledged support from a national institution, Tate Liverpool, that Moviola was able to secure substantial funding for Video Positive. In the same year, 1988, that Moviola pursued funding from the ACGB for the festival, the Tate Liverpool gallery opened at the Albert Dock, a regeneration project that had turned Britain's cultural gaze, however briefly, towards Liverpool. Despite Tate's lack of investment in media art at this time, and initial reluctance from Tate Liverpool's then Director, Richard Francis, the gallery became involved in the Video Positive project.[368] Eddie Berg openly acknowledges the importance of the relationship with Tate Liverpool, suggesting that "without Tate there wouldn't have been Video Positive," because of the money Moviola could secure from the ACGB as a result of the partnership, and also because Tate's involvement was a draw for international artists.[369]   The relationship with Tate Liverpool and Richard Francis was mediated by other members of Liverpool's cultural community, most notably Bryan Biggs at the Bluecoat, an organisation which also rented office space to Moviola in the run-up to the first Video Positive festival,[370] and it was within this network of cultural partners that Moviola and Video Positive began to establish themselves.

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[366] Parkinson and Bianchini (1993), "Liverpool: A Tale of Missed Opportunities?," p.164
[367] Pick (1991), *Vile Jelly: The Birth, Life and Lingering Death of the Arts Council of Great Britain*, p.96
[368] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.9
[369] Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010; Biggs, B. (Artistic Director, Bluecoat), interviewed by the author, 25 January 2011; Biggs (2009a), "FACT: A Liverpool Invention," p.14
[370] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.10. Moviola's office was at the Bluecoat from 1989-2003.

Fig. 2.1.5 The Bluecoat, School Lane, Liverpool, 2012

With notable partners in Steve Littman and Tate Liverpool, Eddie Berg was able to secure funding, with the Film, Video and Broadcasting (FVB) department at the ACGB giving the maximum award of £9000 from its annual budget of £447,500.[371] This grant was matched by Merseyside's RAB, and alongside other funding, Video Positive 1989 had a total budget of almost £30,000.[372] The success of the Video Positive festivals led to Moviola becoming one of the ACGB's Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO), a crucial factor in the development and stability of the organisation, but financial contributions were only part of the support required for the production of an international festival. As a festival of moving image, equipment loans that were available free of charge were almost as important as financial support, and Berg arranged a number of sponsorship deals that provided

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[371] Arts Council of Great Britain (1988), *How the Arts Council Works,* London: Arts Council of Great Britain, p.10
[372] *Income 88/89*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive)

equipment during the early festivals.[373] Many local and national organisations sponsored Video Positive throughout its history, and although financial information is not available in FACT's archive for later Video Positive festivals, its exhibition catalogues provide some detail on the corporate sponsorship arrangements.[374] Choosing to work with local companies was an important decision as it ensured that members of the local business community were key stakeholders in a festival that was otherwise supported by local and national public funding bodies, and it is through this connection with the city that Video Positive was able to create a network that was both supportive of Moviola and influential across Liverpool.

2.1.4 Video Positive or Negative?

First and foremost, Moviola wanted Video Positive to be a "visual extravaganza [which] will bring to wider public attention the revolutionary user of new technology by video artists."[375] It was to do so by achieving a number of aims, with the earliest documented record of these being:

1. To encourage and stimulate the emerging video culture on Merseyside and to provide a platform for new and existing video work
2. To develop the festival into a national event that will debate and create a working platform of informed discussion on live, single screen pieces and installational works
3. To explore the boundaries of the works and working practises within the context of the medium[376]

The core principles behind these aims – stimulating local culture and establishing a national event – remained constant throughout the duration of Video Positive, although the detail of the aims went through a process of evolution that mirrored the festivals themselves. In 1991 Moviola pledged to "encourage, stimulate and celebrate" emerging video art on a national level and, crucially, to develop an international profile for the event. They also stated a desire to "give British artists and audiences the opportunity to see some of the

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[373] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.11
[374] Video Positive catalogues: Berg 2000a; Douglas 1997; Haskel and Faull 1995; Cadwallader 1993; Moviola 1991; and Haskel 1989
[375] *Video Positive '89 An Introduction*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive)
[376] *Application for Regional Project Development Fund (written by Steve Littman – pre 1989)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Funding and Grants 1; Folder - ACE 1991)

best international artists at work," whilst continuing to locate the work exhibited at Video Positive in a broader context.[377]

These changes originated from a recommendation document drawn up by Moviola in the aftermath of Video Positive 1989, and although the aims for Video Positive were not rewritten again, by the mid-1990s the festivals were based around eight keywords: celebration, challenge, innovation, education, stimulation, contention, entertainment and quality.[378]   In isolation, these terms offer very little to illuminate the outcome of the festivals, but they do at least demonstrate that certain criteria, such as a desire to be thought-provoking, was high on its list of priorities. The absence of the word *art* from these keywords steers the festivals away from an art world that had yet to fully accept media art into its institutions, thus emphasising the importance of creating a festival that was accessible to the general public.   As someone who did not come from an arts background,[379] Berg was aware that the only people attending precursors to Video Positive were "video artists...or someone who is married to a video artist,"[380] and his vision of openness and forward-thinking was shared by Clive Gillman who had joined Moviola ahead of Video Positive 1991.[381] Gillman was a video artist who had recently moved to Liverpool from the London video art scene and he expressed an overt desire to expand the boundaries of media art practice beyond the capital city.[382]

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[377] *Application to the Regional Project Development Fund and Regional Commissioning Scheme, April 1989 for VP91*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder - General Admin '89-'91)

[378] *Board Meeting Minutes, 05 September 1995*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1994-1996)

[379] Eddie Berg joined Merseyside Moviola having worked in a front-of-house role at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool. See Introduction

[380] Berg, E. (Director, Moviola), interviewed by Malcolm Dickson, 1989. Available: Rewind Archive, Dundee Contemporary Arts

[381] Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010

[382] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

Fig. 2.1.6 Clive Gillman, *Losing* (1991), Video Positive 1991

However, as its ambitions cannot be verified, testing the aims of Video Positive and analysing its successes and failures is problematic. Without adequate evaluation of the reception of Video Positive from an international perspective, and scant information on the demographics of attendees, any analysis of the international impact of the festivals can only be based on the range of nationalities represented in the artists. The international artists that exhibited work at Video Positive were from primarily Western countries with established video art scenes, and could, therefore, bring financial support from their country's own funding bodies. Consequently, the first Video Positive festival received financial support from the Canadian High Commission and Germany's Goethe-Institut, both of which supported later festivals, alongside organisations such as the Australia Council. By 2000, funding had been secured from European countries, including Slovenia, Norway and Denmark,[383] which again reflects patterns of media art production,[384] although with organisations such as Ars developing concurrently, by the end of the 1990s Video Positive was beginning to be overshadowed. Ars established itself as a festival which included a broader range of media than Video Positive, and by 1996 had opened its own centre which operated as the permanent home of the annual event.[385] With this longer history and broader scope, it had succeeded in establishing a more overt international gaze than Video Positive.

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[383] Berg, E. (ed.) (2000a), *The Other Side of Zero: Video Positive 2000 Catalogue*, Liverpool: FACT, p.63
[384] See Doherty 2003a and Video Positive catalogues: Berg 2000a; Douglas 1997; Haskel and Faull 1995; Cadwallader 1993; Moviola 1991; and Haskel 1989
[385] Berg, E. (2003b), "95: Building Blocks" in *Factor 1995*, ed. C. Doherty, Liverpool: FACT, pp.6-11 (pp.6-7). For more information, see Ars Electronica 2012a

Situating Video Positive in Liverpool was always likely to have this impact on its international profile, but it also offered an opportunity to develop a stronger national profile and local influence as a consequence. As stated in Section 2.1.1, the end of the NIVF in 1988 had left an opportunity for a video art festival to be developed, and Video Positive was unrivalled in Britain throughout its duration. Furthermore, an increasing amount of media art entering Britain's galleries during the 1990s, and a greater level of output by artists, enabled more exposure of the practice and, therefore, more funding opportunities to emerge. Video Positive 1989 included about fifteen new commissions,[386] and by Video Positive 1997 the festival had grown to over forty exhibitions across ten separate venues.[387] Although Video Positive 1997 could perhaps be seen as the zenith of Video Positive, with such a scale of growth transforming the festival almost beyond recognition,[388] the difficulties this growth signalled led to Berg reporting to the FACT Board that Video Positive 1997 was only "a qualified success."[389] By this, Berg was referring to the financial strain that such a large festival placed on FACT and its resources, especially as it happened at a time of great upheaval for the organisation. 1997 was also the year that the FACT brand was launched, and the financial pressures of this process, alongside the ISEA98 project, exacerbated the problems caused by the enlarged Video Positive 1997, and led to a significantly scaled down version of the festival three years later. That Video Positive 2000 was so significantly reduced in size, exhibiting at only three venues in Liverpool city centre, can be seen as Moviola having reverted to its earlier observation of Video Positive 1989 that "in an effort to make it big we made it too big,"[390] but it may also be evidence of video art's better integration into the conventional arts institutional framework, thus reducing the need for an event of this nature.

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[386] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.10

[387] These venues were the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Cream at Nation, 68 Hope Street Gallery, Open Eye and Wade Smith Outdoor Athletic in Liverpool and Castlefield Gallery, Cornerhouse, Green Room, Manchester City Art Galleries and The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (Doherty, C. (2003c), *Factor 1997,* Liverpool: FACT, p.26)

[388] *Video Positive 97: Escaping Gravity*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – VP '97 (HIST.04), Folder – No. 4, VP '97)

[389] *AGM Minutes, 16 December 1998* (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)

[390] *Board Meeting Minutes, 09 May 1990*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)

Its inability to sustain itself must be seen as the festival's greatest failure, although this should not denigrate its successes. The most notable of these was the development of audiences which saw attendance figures of 35,000 in 1989[391] rising to 65,000 by 1995[392] and 88,000 in 1997.[393] Video Positive 1997 was something of an anomaly, however, as it was held in both Manchester and Liverpool and, therefore, had a much larger catchment area, a fact which is particularly important when audiences came primarily from the region.[394] Audience figures, whether representative of the total number of visitors or individual visits to exhibitions, are not particularly illuminating, however, and they do very little to explain the distribution of visitors across exhibitions, how audiences attended and were counted, or what their responses to the exhibitions were. This information is not available for the Video Positive festivals, although the community programme that was introduced for Video Positive 1991 suggests some awareness by Moviola of the need to treat the Liverpool community as valuable to the festival, both as a resource and as indirect hosts of the event. Co-founder of Merseyside Moviola and editor of the Video Positive 1991 catalogue, Lisa Haskel, posed an important set of questions in this regard in her editorial essay:

> What active role – in a city of vast cultural richness and energy
> but appalling lack of funding for anything, least of all the arts –
> can the Festival have on a long-term basis for the people that
> live here? How can the Festival ensure that people from
> Merseyside actively participate and represent themselves
> through video art each time the festival comes around?[395]

While these questions are, of course, very difficult to answer, they led Video Positive to establish a community arts strand to the five festivals after 1991, which saw the artworks produced by community groups presented in tandem with the main artistic programme.[396]

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[391] *Some Facts about Video Positive '89,* (Available: FACT Hard-drive)

[392] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000), p.1

[393] *Visitor Numbers*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box: VP '97 (HIST.04); Folder – No. 4, VP '97)

[394] In 1989, 20% of visitors to Video Positive attended from outside Merseyside (*Some Facts about Video Positive '89,* (Available: FACT Hard-drive))

[395] Haskel, L. (1991), "Installation, Experimentation, Collaboration" in *Video Positive Catalogue*, ed. Moviola, Sheffield: Unicorn Press Ltd, pp.35-36, (p.35)

[396] See Section 2.2.2

2.1.5 Setting a Precedent

Video Positive's demise should not overshadow the success of the festivals. Despite claims that it had "an international reputation and influence,"[397] the impact of Video Positive must be understood as confined to the Western world, and its longevity in memory can perhaps be attributed to the fact that many of the exhibiting artists still work within media art, a world that remains relatively small. Nationally, the impact of Video Positive is easier to ascertain, and although the festival did not survive FACT's changing priorities, several broader media art festivals have emerged that have followed a similar model. The AV Festival was established in the North East of England in 2003, and has been produced on a biennial basis since 2006. Although working with contemporary art, music and film, and being spread across the region's main cities, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, the AV Festival is built on a similar ethos of "collaboration and partnership," and comprises a number of different events from exhibitions to symposia.[398] Similarly, FACT and Cornerhouse, Manchester, and the now disbanded folly, Lancaster,[399] launched a festival of new cinema, digital culture and art in 2009, Abandon Normal Devices (AND), which alternates between Liverpool and Manchester,[400] thus demonstrating that the positive elements of a cross-city approach have been developed following the difficulties of Video Positive 1997.

The festivals that emerged in the aftermath of Video Positive demonstrate how effectively festivals can use art to change the functions of a city by interrupting its flow through public artworks, an idea that was at the forefront of Lewis Biggs' mind when he developed the concept of the Liverpool Biennial.[401] He stated that using the city as a canvas for art removes the institutionalised context within which art is traditionally consumed,[402] and in a city where art festivals became integrated into the cultural scene, through events like Video

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[397] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000), p.1

[398] AV Festival (2012), *About* (Online)

[399] For more information on the AND festival, see Abandon Normal Devices 2012

[400] Abandon Normal Devices (2012), *About Us* (Online)

[401] Biggs, L. (FACT Board Member, former Director, Liverpool Biennial), interviewed by the author, 5 December 2011. Lewis Biggs first came to Liverpool as the Curator of Exhibitions and Displays in 1988 before being appointed at Tate Liverpool's Director in 1990. In 1994 he launched Arts Transpennine in 1994, and was appointed as the Director of Liverpool Biennial ahead of the first event in 1999.

[402] ibid.

Positive and Visionfest, the Liverpool Biennial easily filled the space left by the demise of both of these festivals.

Fig. 2.1.7 Using the city as a canvas: Vuk Cosic's *ASCII Architecture* (2000) projected onto St George's Hall, Liverpool, Video Positive 2000

As can also be said of the Liverpool Biennial today, Steven Bode stated in 2000 that Video Positive had:

> Lit up the city of Liverpool on a regular basis over the course of the last eleven years, acting as a magnet for some of the most innovative and creative work in artists' film, video and digital media from across the world.[403]

This was enabled by the existence of a network of art institutions that spanned the city, and Video Positive succeeded in generating an audience that became accustomed to biennial events which allowed them to experience different art forms in unconventional ways.

Fig. 2.1.8 Using the city as a canvas: Richard Wilson's *Turning the Place Over* (2007), Liverpool Biennial 2007

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[403] Bode (2000), "The Other Side of Zero," p.6

Video Positive was instrumental in the development of this network of art institutions in Liverpool because, without premises for exhibition, Moviola had to become adept at forging relationships with other art organisations in the region. Alongside collaborating with a number of media art curators, including Steve Littman, Stephen Bode and Charles Esche, Moviola developed a lasting relationship with, notably, Tate Liverpool and the Bluecoat, both of which provided exhibition spaces in each of the Video Positive festivals. Furthermore, they also exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and many other galleries across Merseyside and Manchester. This created a network of art institutions that had experience of collaborating for the presentation of a city-wide event, and alongside Moviola's decision to exhibit within Liverpool's public spaces, Video Positive laid the foundations for future events. This network of institutions has proven to be essential in Liverpool's attempts to foster an international art scene which could stand up to the seemingly overwhelming draw of London, and this was reflected in the Liverpool Culture Company's *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture* (2002). In this document, the Culture Company stated that the city still had aspirations "to be a true Festival City," and because of its "cultural infrastructure of international quality and renown [and] a strong indigenous cultural life,"[404] it was well placed to host the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) year in 2008, a claim that contributed to the city securing the award.[405]

The quality of the art that was exhibited during the Video Positive festivals was also an important factor in the festivals' success, with renowned video artists such as David Hall, Judith Goddard and Jeremy Welsh exhibiting works in 1989. Goddard's work *Silver Lining* (1989) was one of the pieces commissioned for the National Videowall Project,[406] a bank of monitors that was installed at Tate Liverpool and used for the projection of single and multiple images within video artworks.

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[404] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, Liverpool: Liverpool Culture Company, p.1
[405] For more information on Liverpool 2008, see Chapter 3.3
[406] Rewind (2012a), *Silver Lining/First Light* (Online)

Fig. 2.1.9 The National Videowall Project, Tate Liverpool, Video Positive 1989

This presentational style offered artists and audiences the ability to "focus on individual images, move between big and small and juxtapose images" in a way that single monitor projections previously had not,[407] and the Videowall provides a good example of how innovative and ground-breaking the work of Video Positive was at the time.

Understanding the context of media art presentation in the 1990s is important when assessing the impact of Video Positive, however, as constantly evolving technology and improving presentational standards can be seen as having rendered early media artworks as out-dated. This was demonstrated by an exhibition held at FACT in 2007, 'Re: [Video Positive] Archiving Video Positively,' which provided a retrospective of the Video Positive festivals. Re: [Video Positive] was current Director Mike Stubbs' first show after joining the organisation, and having been one of Video Positive 1989's exhibiting artists, he presented a show which contained a number of works from each of the festivals. Despite the success of Video Positive, Re: [Video Positive] failed to attract any significant coverage in the mainstream national press, with only Liverpool's *Daily Post* newspaper reporting directly on the show.[408] Specialist arts magazine *Mute* did run a critique of the exhibition, however,

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[407] Littman, S. (1989), "The National Videowall Project" in *Video Positive '89 Catalogue*, ed. L. Haskel, Liverpool: Merseyside Moviola, p.12, (p.12)

[408] Baxter, L. (2007), "Arts Diary: Exhibition Looks at Speed of Change; FACT has Launched an On-line Archive of Video Artworks," *Liverpool Daily Post*, 5 September 2007

which stated that although Video Positive was innovative at the time, presenting the works again up to eighteen years later simply revealed "how bulky and old-fashioned" the technology had become.[409]

Fig. 2.1.10 Judith Goddard, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1991), first shown at Video Positive 1991 and re-screened at Re: [Video Positive], FACT, 2007

That the artworks could be perceived as having been "rendered obsolete by the pace of scientific change"[410] is a dilemma in the field of media art, and Pryle Behrman's article states that Re: [Video Positive] inadvertently created "a specific type of poignancy that is both unique to technologically-reliant media such as video art and wholly unintended in the original."[411]   This reliance on presentational context and technology is a dilemma that persists in media art, and remains unresolved despite the aims of the Video Positive festival "to explore the boundaries of the works and working practices within the context of the medium."[412]

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[409] Behrman, P. (2007), "Video Negative Positive," *mute*, 13 November 2007
[410] ibid.
[411] ibid.
[412] *Application for Regional Project Development Fund (written by Steve Littman – pre 1989)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Funding and Grants 1; Folder - ACE 1991)

2.2 Community: Collaboration Programme

> *In the future, the source of human achievement will not be extraordinary individuals, but extraordinary combinations of people... who discover their own capacity to be extraordinary in the process of collaborating with others who acknowledge their talents and gifts.[413]*

2.2.1 Community Arts in Liverpool

One of the key achievements of the Video Positive festivals was the launch of a community arts programme that ran in conjunction with the main festival programme. Community arts have their own distinct origins and historical development, and Owen Kelly states that the term is used to capture a broad range of cultural activities "whose precise boundaries remain undrawn."[414] As such, the term must be understood dynamically in order to account for the vast array of people and practices involved in the movement.[415] A dynamic understanding also allows the term to mean "different things to different people,"[416] and in this sense, with its history traced to the early twentieth century and main impetus since the 1960s,[417] it shares some similarities with the practices now understood as media art. As with media art, the community arts movement is infused with ideas of shared production, and by targeting those members of society who do not traditionally participate in the established arts educational framework, it remains most relevant to those:

> Whose own agency, whose own purchase on value, in society has already been devalued by socio-economic/political and cultural factors and for whom the participation process is a means of intimate self-validation.[418]

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[413] Hargrove (1998), *Mastering the Art of Creative Collaboration*, p.2

[414] Kelly, O. (1984), *Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels,* London: Comedia Publishing Group, p.1

[415] ibid., p.56

[416] Kay (2000), "Art and Community Development: The Role the Arts Have in Regeneration Communities," p.421

[417] Bishop, C. (2006), "Introduction" in *Participation*, ed. C. Bishop, Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press and Whitechapel, pp.10-17 (p.11)

[418] McGonagle, D. (2007), "It's Art…But Not as We Know It!" in *Art of Negotiation*, eds. D. Butler and V. Reiss, Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, pp.6-9 (p.7)

Furthermore, with origins in the social upheaval of the 1960s, community arts was cemented as an important part of cultural practice in the following decades,[419] and Claire Bishop states that the participative elements of community arts practice incorporates three complementary agendas: activation; authorship; and community. In pursuit of these agendas, she suggests that art can be used as a means of enabling people to "determine their own social and political reality," establish a more democratic and egalitarian society and restore collective responsibility by reasserting the importance of community.[420]

In a later text, Bishop suggests that collaborative practice has become the contemporary avant-garde,[421] although Grant Kester challenges this view by suggesting that the field is better understood as a "continuum of collaborative and 'relational' practices" with roots in art and cultural activism.[422] He suggests that collaborative practice is based upon the notion of exchange between "segments of the public that were often alienated from the institutions of high art"[423] and artists who are, by contrast, "viewed as creatively, intellectually, financially, and institutionally empowered."[424] Kester states that this is exacerbated by the output of community arts projects, which frequently take place in isolation from the institutions of art that facilitate them, continuing to "address the belief systems that operate in [gallery] spaces,"[425] and whilst the issue of finding a place for community artworks is discussed further in Section 2.2.5, it highlights the need for a flexible definition of the terminology.

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[419] Worpole, K. (1991), "The Age of Leisure" in *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture*, eds. J. Corner and S. Harvey, London and New York: Routledge, pp.137-150 (p.150)

[420] Bishop (2006), "Introduction," p.12

[421] Bishop, C. (2009), "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents" in *The Fifth Floor: Ideas Taking Space*, ed. P. Gorschlüter, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.22-27 (p.22)

[422] Kester, G.H. (2009), "The Social Turn: Another Turn" in *The Fifth Floor: Ideas Taking Space*, ed. P. Gorschlüter, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.28-29 (p.28); Kester, G.H. (2004), *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, p.9

[423] Kester (2004), *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, p. 126

[424] ibid., p.137

[425] ibid., p.17

Nevertheless, whether community arts are viewed as reasserting the divisions within society or as having the potential to make it more egalitarian, they can be understood to be providing an opportunity to challenge the elitist attitudes of the ACGB throughout its history, and Paul Clements states that this can best be seen in the community arts slogan of "let a million flowers bloom," which was in direct opposition to the ACGB's definition of artists as "few but roses."[426] This resonates with the development of community arts practice within Liverpool which has built on the city's strong tradition of grassroots arts activity[427] and, given the abundance of socio-economic difficulties evidenced across the city, this reactive art practice has flourished. This has been compounded by Liverpool having, since 1985, the largest number of national galleries outside London, thus ensuring that many of the city's cultural institutions operated in accordance with changing museum policy. Prior to the nationalisation of the galleries, however, the city's community arts scene was thriving with, notably, The Great Georges Project launching in 1968 with the support of John Moores' son Peter Moores.[428] The project is more commonly known as the Blackie, and today has been renamed as the Black-E, due to its location in a pollution-blackened former church on Great George Street, at the intersection of Toxteth, Chinatown and Liverpool city centre.[429]

Fig. 2.2.1 The Black-E next to the Chinatown Gate, Great George Street and Nelson Street, Liverpool, 2012

[426] Clements, P. (2011), "The Recuperation of Participatory Art Practices," *International Journal of Art and Design Education,* vol.30, no.1, pp.18-30 (pp.19-20)
[427] Dunn, A. (Freelance Artist, former *Superchannel* Programme Manager), interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010
[428] The Black-E (2011a), *About Us* (Online)
[429] The Black-E (2011b), *The Building* (Online)

This location places the organisation on the edge of the most regenerated area of Liverpool, the city centre, as well as one of the most deprived areas of the city, if not the country,[430] and community arts in this context can be seen as providing a bridge between the elitist art world that exists in the city's galleries and the communities that surrounds them. Sam Gathercole describes the Black-E as "both 'underground' and 'community' based,"[431] and states that it was specifically intended to facilitate creative collaboration between artists and certain sectors of society to "release energies at present restricted or buried by divisions of class, sex, education, work, money, culture, and language."[432] The Black-E's approach of providing a social space and facilitating community arts projects beyond its own premises, alongside its location on the edge of marginalised communities where many of the criteria of social exclusion, such as low levels of education, ethnicity and unemployment, exist, saw the organisation develop a strong profile and reputation for the implementation of highly relevant and inclusive community arts projects, from exhibitions and performances to apprenticeships.[433]

However, during the 1980s and 1990s, Liverpool's more renowned galleries began to develop community programmes that were consonant with changing national attitudes in the arts. This was particularly notable with the opening of Tate's satellite gallery in Liverpool, and despite its long-term effect on the city's cultural scene, it received heavy criticism from residents for being an inadequate response to the scale of the socio-economic problems present in the city at the time. Tate Liverpool's education programme was developed in response to these criticisms,[434] and projects such as the *Media Van* saw better mobilisation of resources for projects that took place outside the gallery itself.[435] Providing greater access to resources for art production, however, does not automatically

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[430] In May 2012, both Toxteth East and Toxteth West were reported as in the ten poorest areas in Britain, along with three other city locations in Liverpool. (BBC (2012), "Church Urban Fund Finds 'Poorest' in North-West England," *BBC Online*, 21 May 2012 (Online))

[431] Gathercole, S. (2007), "Facts and Fictions: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde in the late-1960s and 70s" in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, eds. C. Grunenberg and R. Knifton, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.135-156 (p.141)

[432] The Blackie (1970), 'Towards a Common Language' cited in Gathercole (2007), "Facts and Fictions: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde in the late-1960s and 70s," p.141

[433] The Black-E (2011c), *What's On* (Online)

[434] McKane, A. (2009), "*The Fifth Floor*: Elevating Social Responsibility in the Public Art Museum" in *The Fifth Floor: Ideas Taking Space*, ed. P. Gorschlüter, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.54-63 (p.55)

[435] Hooper-Greenhill (1991), *Museum and Gallery Education*, p.5

ensure that a community arts project is successfully completed, and although Liverpool had many of the components of successful community arts practices due to the presence of skilled artists, committed art organisations, relatively secure funding and politicised communities, each of these components requires careful management to ensure meaningful participation takes place.

Engaging with art has been heralded as an opportunity to "promote social cohesion, economic growth, and political stability,"[436] but this condition does not occur independently and, therefore, it can be asserted that the commitment of individuals who work in community arts to using art as a tool to provide a service to society is crucial. However, art organisations rarely have the freedom and resources to work on projects simply because they believe in their value and, with restrictions on budgets, designing projects to maximise opportunities for obtaining funding remains common practice. Consequently, it must be noted that the increase in community and collaborative arts practice has coincided with increasing demands from funders to widen participation and prioritise greater levels of engagement in art projects, in an attempt to better satisfy changing attitudes towards how public money is spent. The integration of community arts programmes can be seen as an extension of the historic role of museums and galleries as educators, and it reflects the significant shift in museum policy over the last thirty years. However, it must also be balanced with a simultaneous shift in funding objectives which have encouraged community participation programmes. In this new environment, art institutions, and the art they produce, are part of:

> A whole (social) process of experience, learning and change at individual, group as well as official levels, in which there is a built-in critical reflexivity in people's learning and changing relationships with these spaces as they engage with, experience and reflect on the changed reality presented by the art installation.[437]

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[436] Luke, T.W. (2002), *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press and London, p.xxi

[437] Percy-Smith, B. and Carney, C. (2011), "Using Art Installations as Action Research to Engage Children and Communities in Evaluating and Redesigning City Centre Spaces," *Educational Action Research,* vol.19, no.1, pp.23-39 (p.37)

This can be a powerful tool, but relies upon dedicated art organisations finding ways to deliver community projects that respond to the individual demands of their own communities as well as delivering results that continue to appease the objectives of funders, demands which can be inherently incompatible.

2.2.2 A History of the Collaboration Programme

During the 1980s, Merseyside Moviola had been one of the art organisations in Liverpool that was committed to working with community groups, having run a number of film and animation workshops in community centres across the region.[438] By the beginning of the 1990s, its community work became more formally integrated into the organisation's programme, and following the inaugural Video Positive festival in 1989, Moviola responded to its own concerns that the festival had focused on "too much product in too little space."[439] As stated in Section 2.1.2, for the second Video Positive festival, Moviola stated its desire to give "a strong regional feel to Video Positive [19]91."[440] As a consequence, it sought and secured funding for a temporary post that would operate in the nine months leading up to the festival. The post that was created was for an animateur, a term which is infrequently used in visual art practice but which can be defined as:

> A practicing artist, in any art form, who uses her/his skills, talents and personality to enable others to compose, design, devise, create, perform or engage with works of art of any kind.[441]

Simon Robertshaw, a video artist who had exhibited at Video Positive 1989, was appointed to the role, and his work was "devoted entirely to development and promotion of video and electronic media art within communities and formal education."[442]

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[438] Haskel, interviewed by the author, 21 January 2010
[439] *Board Meeting Minutes, 09 May 1990*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)
[440] *Board Meeting Minutes, 14 February 1990*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)
[441] Animarts (2003), *The Art of the Animateur: An Investigation into the Skills and Insights Required for Artists to Work Effectively in Schools and Communities*, London: Animarts, p.9
[442] *Moviola Business Plan 1992-1995*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1), p.17

Despite funding for the post only being for a few months in the first instance, Moviola outlined a long-term vision that would see the animateur working with other staff at the organisation to establish a strategy for collaborative projects to be integrated across Moviola's programme, as well as seeing artists working with members of the community to create a number of "large scale video installation[s]...to be exhibited in a public context in Liverpool City Centre."[443] The long-term strategy developed by the animateur saw the creation of the Community and Education Programme which featured heavily in Video Positive 1991, and it subsequently gained further financial support ahead of Video Positive 1993. Louise Forshaw was appointed as animateur in July 1992, and it was under her guidance that the Community and Education Programme was renamed the Collaboration Programme, with her motive being a desire for the programme to "exist free from titles which compartmentalise" the work being undertaken.[444]

The permanent Collaboration Programme which emerged from this was intended to integrate the work of the animateur ahead of the Video Positive festivals into the everyday operations of Moviola, and consequently placed community art high on the organisation's agenda.[445] The aim was to "offer the kind of possibilities that are not available through traditional areas of training or education,"[446] a particularly useful tool in a city with lower than average levels of education and employment. According to Moviola's Business Plan 1992–1995, the Collaboration Programme, then still called Community and Education, intended to:

1. Develop educational opportunities by exploring new opportunities and creative applications for the use of video and electronic media in formal education and community contexts
2. Enable groups traditionally without access to the media to gain access by initiating and facilitating community projects
3. Provide vocational training in a shortage area, by training the people without jobs for the jobs without people[447]

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[443] *Board Meeting Minutes, 05 September 1990*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)
[444] *Animateur's Report, July 1992-July 1993*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Ed's Office)
[445] *Board Meeting Minutes, 28 March 1990*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)
[446] *Moviola Business Plan 1992-1995*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1), p.17
[447] ibid., p.18

The format for the delivery of these aims was initially a series of individual projects connected to each of the Video Positive festivals, such as *My Idea of Paradise* (1991), a collaboration with patients at Ashworth Psychiatric Hospital in Maghull which was screened at the St Johns Shopping Centre during Video Positive 1991,[448] but as the Collaboration Programme developed, it became increasingly defined by a set of "underlying critical principles"[449] that connected groups of people and individuals to the organisation through artistic collaboration.[450]

Fig. 2.2.2 Ashworth Hospital (North) Video Group, *My Idea of Paradise* (1991), Video Positive 1991

According to FACT, the Collaboration Programme established itself as "a ground-breaking arts initiative that places contemporary art practice at its core"[451] and it engaged in a variety of different activities, including creating artworks for exhibition and creative training for a wide range of participants, as well as arts education and public programming that is more typical of arts educational theory and practice.[452] Although there has been little critical interrogation of FACT's Collaboration Programme, commentators have supported FACT's claims,[453] and it is perhaps the organisation's view of the Collaboration Programme

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[448] Moviola (1991), *Video Positive 1991 Catalogue,* Sheffield: Unicorn Press Ltd, pp.39-40

[449] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000), p.2

[450] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.13

[451] *FACT: Collaboration Programme*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive)

[452] ibid.

[453] Biggs (2011), "Radical Art City?," p.77; Dunn (2004), "Who Needs a Spin Doctor? Part Two," p.20

as a commissioning department[454] that has prevented its location within more conventional arts educational literature. Alan Dunn, who worked for FACT, 2001–2007, states that the innovative approach of the Collaboration Programme provided "a more genuine and fertile environment" for both artists and participants, with communities as a whole entity becoming the constant factor rather than the artists or facilitators. This allows for a continual process of change in creative influence,[455] and the Collaboration Programme established a constantly evolving profile that is situated within a changing environment of art theory and practice.

Openness to change has been integral to the Collaboration Programme, and this has been reflected by the frequent alterations to the name of the programme over its twenty year history. Having launched as the Community and Education Programme in 1991, it has also been called 'Collaborations and Engagement' and 'Participation.' Using terms like these which are, at various times, debatable in their definitions, reveals something of the complexity of naming an ephemeral project like the Collaboration Programme. Currently, FACT have divided it into Schools and Learning, Communities, Young People and Health Spaces. These four areas fall under the umbrella of 'Engagement and Learning' and although the programme areas have been subjected to many different titles, the basic premise and core principles remain the same. Consequently, the Collaboration Programme today continues working to "engage artists, communities, regeneration agencies and others in the development of strategic frameworks and projects which support cultural production."[456]

2.2.3 The *tenantspin* Project

While FACT's Collaboration Programme comprises a number projects that have operated for varying lengths of time, one of its more lasting projects has been *tenantspin*, "an internet community based on rich media broadcasting."[457] Rich media includes audio, video and animation, and the output of the individual projects are broadcast on a television channel

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[454] Dunn (2004), "Who Needs a Spin Doctor? Part Two," p.20
[455] ibid.
[456] *FACT Artistic Policy*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1)
[457] *Superchannel Poster*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

streamed live on the internet.[458] *tenantspin* began as an iteration of the *Superchannel* project conceived by Danish artists collective Superflex, and the Liverpool *Superchannel* launched a few months prior to the final Video Positive festival in 2000. Superflex are three artists, Rasmus Nielsen, Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, who have worked on a number of interactive and media art projects which range from social commentary films to mapping exercises since 1993. The first *Superchannel* studio opened in Copenhagen in 1998, with the *Superchannel* in Liverpool being the second of more than thirty studios to open in total.[459]

Fig. 2.2.3 Superflex (Rasmus Nielsen, Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen)

The collaboration was facilitated by FACT, and took place between Superflex and the Liverpool Housing Action Trust (LHAT). The first Housing Action Trusts (HAT) were introduced by the Housing Act of 1988[460] and were intended "to tackle the management and renewal of badly run-down housing estates."[461] LHAT was the largest of the six HATs[462] and differed because it was concerned particularly with the city's high-rise blocks.[463] Having launched in 1993, LHAT was tasked with reviewing the future of the city's sixty-seven tower

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[458] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[459] Superflex (2010), *Superchannel* (Online)

[460] Great Britain (1988), *Housing Act 1988*, London: The Stationery Office

[461] Tallon (2010), *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, p.61; Couch (2003), *City of Change and Challenge: Urban Planning and Regeneration in Liverpool*, p.161

[462] HATs were established in Liverpool, North Hull, Stonebridge, Waltham Forest, Tower Hamlets and Castle Vale (*Liverpool Housing Action Trust, Information Pack*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[463] Couch (2003), *City of Change and Challenge: Urban Planning and Regeneration in Liverpool,* p.161

blocks,[464] and with a budget of £260 million, was "to create sustainable housing solutions and bring in private finance initiatives."[465]

Fig. 2.2.4   Derelict Belem Tower, Sefton Park, Liverpool, 2012

The residents of the tower blocks, through the High-Rise Tenants Group (HRTG), elected to join LHAT's twelve year scheme of regeneration or demolition and re-housing[466] and, ultimately, fifty-four of sixty-seven blocks were demolished, two remain unoccupied and derelict, and only eleven are inhabited today. The HRTG had been established by LHAT as an outlet for tenants,[467] and despite the problems of high-rise living in tower blocks which were in need of major refurbishment, many of the residents who had moved there during the slum clearance of the 1960s, were reluctant to have their homes demolished.[468]

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[464] Great Britain (1993), *The Liverpool Housing Action Trust (Transfer of Property) Order 1993*, London: The Stationery Office

[465] Hope, S. and Carrington, S. (2007), "Alan Dunn, tenantspin" in *Art of Negotiation*, eds. D. Butler and V. Reiss, Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, pp.254-280 (p.258)

[466] Dunn (2004), "Who Needs a Spin Doctor? Part Two," p.18

[467] Prudames, D. (2005), *Living It Up – High Rise Society At The Museum of Liverpool Life* (Online)

[468] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010. See also Dunn 2004

The majority of the residents were aged over fifty, and 40% were over seventy years old[469] and, therefore, *tenantspin* worked primarily with an elderly population. Consequently, Liverpool's *Superchannel* introduced many of the participants to a completely new concept of technology and it became part of a:

> Network of local studios used by people and communities as a discussion forum, presentation medium and a physical gathering place. It was a tool that enables you to produce internet TV directly engaging users in the creation and evolution of content.[470]

The *Superchannel* model was launched before mainstream broadcast channels such as YouTube were conceived and was, therefore, a unique and innovative means of disseminating, in this case, artworks and opinion pieces that would otherwise not have been viewed by the wider public. In the run up to Video Positive 2000, the *Superchannel* was based at a hub at Coronation Court, Liverpool's oldest tower block, in the Norris Green area of the city. Coronation Court was built in 1956,[471] and upon opening was considered to be a luxurious alternative to the city's Victorian terraces, with central heating and indoor bathrooms.

Fig. 2.2.5 The now demolished Coronation Court, Liverpool

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[469] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))
[470] Superflex (2010), *Superchannel* (Online)
[471] Coronation Court was ten storeys high, 99 metres long, and contained 114 flats (*Coronation Court and Langholme Heights*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

In the years that followed, however, these facilities became run-down,[472] and despite many of the tenants of Coronation Court being particularly vocal in their support for refurbishment,[473] the block was eventually demolished and the headquarters of the *Superchannel* relocated to LHAT's office at the Cunard Building on the Liverpool Waterfront. After the conclusion of Video Positive 2000, Superflex left the collaboration as planned, and the Superchannel project was renamed *tenantspin*. The *Superchannel* effectively served as a pilot for *tenantspin*, and with a long-term plan in place, FACT began the process of recruiting a project manager to facilitate the collaborative element of the project.

Alan Dunn, an artist from Glasgow who had ten years of experience working on a range of community-based art projects across the country, was appointed as project manager in 2001, and under his guidance, *tenantspin* became increasingly situated at the heart of a growing debate on access, particularly for socially excluded groups such as the elderly, to new technologies like the Internet, as well as playing a role in community development and urban regeneration.[474] Dunn recognised the need for *tenantspin* to respond to its changing environment, and whilst early debates focused on the issues of regeneration and displacement, the conclusion of the LHAT scheme saw the original issues of low standards of living removed by either the refurbishment or demolition of the participants' tower blocks. Furthermore, with the opening of the FACT Centre in 2003, and LHAT due to be disbanded in 2005, *tenantspin* relocated for a final time to the FACT Centre, and the project became less focused on high-rise living as its participants were no longer strictly recruited from the tower blocks.

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[472] Hope and Carrington (2007), "Alan Dunn, tenantspin," p.258

[473] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16)). See also Cobalt Housing 2009

[474] Kelly, P. (2002), "Case Study 02: Community Worker" in *Supermanual: The Incomplete Guide to the Superchannel*, ed. M. Brewster, Liverpool: FACT, pp.14-17 (p.17)

2.2.4 *tenantspin* Aims and Achievements

Liverpool's *Superchannel* was launched with the intention of facilitating "two way dialogues between participants from the block and online participants globally."[475] A number of aims were outlined at the beginning of the project, including:

- To investigate the possibilities that this kind of interactivity opens up – the kinds of communication and dialogue provoked
- To provide creative tools for people to work with at various different levels to create and contribute to the development of communities in various different contexts – within the tower block itself, between Superchannel studios across the world and online
- To create an opportunity for an online audience to experience and respond to a particular view of the world
- To test out the potential intervention of technology as a tool within an existing community and the ways in which it can contribute to that communities future development[476]

These aims reveal that the project was ambitious at the outset, and they outline a desire to promote collaboration between a public body, LHAT, an art organisation, FACT, and a community group which had very little experience of, or past exposure to, these core concepts. These aims have evolved along with the project, although it is interesting to note that the *tenantspin* website does not currently list any specific aims for the project. Instead it details some less formally identified elements of its history and future which places regeneration, e-democracy and artists' commissions at its heart.[477] Furthermore, it also states a commitment to delivering an experience for participants that focuses on quality not quantity, despite stating that it feels a "'moral' obligation to include and involve an increasing number of people."[478]

Without explicit or easily identifiable aims, the task of analysing its effectiveness and success is somewhat difficult, but certain assertions can be made about the project to date. Although the *Superchannel* was originally designed to last only a few months, *tenantspin* is

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[475] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[476] *Superchannel, The Tower Block: Project Description*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[477] tenantspin (2012), *History* (Online)

[478] ibid.

now in its thirteenth year and, throughout its history, has undergone a continual process of evolution that has mirrored the changing circumstances of the participants and policy. This transient nature is typical of community arts projects, and *tenantspin* has been adept at maintaining a pragmatic approach to its remit through its commitment to promoting a process that is as reciprocal as possible. As such, *tenantspin* runs a variety of projects, some of which are led by the artists who are commissioned to work with the group, and others which are community-led, and range from garden parties to karaoke.


Fig. 2.2.6 A *tenantspin* broadcast, Liverpool

Consequently, the partners in the collaboration are constantly changing, either due to alterations in staff, participants or artists, but the most notable change took place following the dissolution of LHAT and its replacement by a housing association in 2005.[479]

As outlined in its original aims, *tenantspin* was to be broadcast on the Internet as a live streaming platform, and it was this application of a revolutionary media tool that was intrinsic to the project. Despite its ambitions, *tenantspin* only had access to rudimentary computer hardware, with clunky Internet dial-up connections that were typical of the

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[479] Arena Housing, a social housing association, took control of managing the remaining tower blocks in Liverpool and won this contract due to pledging their commitment to *tenantspin* (Fox, P. (former *tenantspin* Manager), interviewed by the author, 12 August 2010)

time.[480] Furthermore, many, if not all, of the residents were new to computer technology, and with certain technological advancements still in their infancy, so too were some of the artists and facilitators. Computers were available for the tenants of the tower blocks to use in a communal area of Coronation Court, and later at the LHAT office, and FACT provided access to, and training on, the other equipment that was required, from cameras to microphones. As *tenantspin* evolved, so did the art projects with the gradual introduction of more diverse media, and its participants were given access to technologies, education and training.[481] Consequently, a challenge for *tenantspin* has been keeping abreast of the technological advances that have pushed far beyond its original innovations in video streaming, in order to continue to drive how the Internet and media technology can be used creatively,[482] and to deliver the more ephemeral benefits that are common to community arts: personal development, self-confidence and integration into a community.[483]
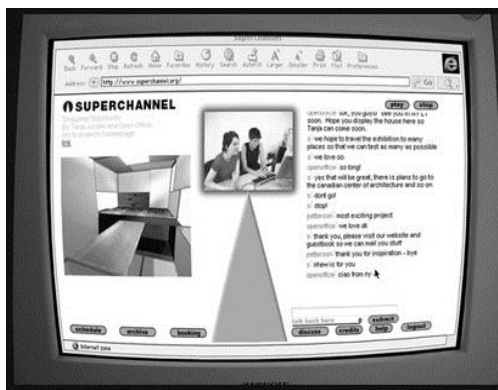
(L) Fig. 2.2.7 Screenshot of the first Superchannel website, 2000

(R) Fig. 2.2.8 Superflex's second *Superchannel* studio, Coronation Court, Liverpool, 2000

Furthermore, by working with this particular community group, *tenantspin* has consistently dealt with issues of poverty, old age and access to society. In so doing, it has raised pertinent questions that have frequently been overlooked in contemporary society, with that of digitisation being particularly notable. The increasingly digitised world has seen many transactions, including shopping, banking and socialising, beginning to occur online, and although certain questions of social exclusion have been raised in other Collaboration

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[480] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010
[481] *tenantspin*, interviewed in Gorschlüter, P. (ed.) (2009), *The Fifth Floor: Ideas Taking Space*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p.124
[482] ibid., p.123
[483] See Kay 2000

Programme projects, *tenantspin* has frequently addressed the issue of the 'digital divide,' something that the government has only recently discussed in their *Digital Britain* report of 2009.[484] The digital divide is the gulf that has opened between young and old, with younger generations today being almost inherently computer literate whilst their forebears remain, to some extent, excluded from the new communities that have emerged through the Internet. At its inception, this understanding was at the core of the *Superchannel* project, with Paul Kelly, an LHAT community worker, stating that:

> Many disadvantaged communities still have neither access to the hardware nor the skills to take advantage of it. And where they do, older people are frequently excluded, with programmes prioritising employment and training outputs over access and quality of life potentials. Superchannel: The Tower Block was to be a project which would stretch the way new technology was used with a community generally denied access to it. Here was an opportunity to explore some of these issues, and to assess the impact of a set of new technological tools on a group of older people.[485]

Here, the project's specific aim to enhance the democratic process with regards to social issues in Liverpool is clearly outlined. This demonstrates how the Internet, and art projects more widely, can be used to enhance democratic processes and enable communities to develop their voice where political engagement through voting and participation appear to fail. *tenantspin* has played an integral role, as a mediator and participant, in how Liverpool's high-rise communities have been regenerated, both physically and psychologically, as well as assisting in the process of adapting to their new low-rise communities. As the project has evolved, it has become infused with a democratic approach to how collaboration is conducted, and although many of the projects that take place today can be understood as a very literal interpretation of regeneration, with *tenantspin* currently working in the Anfield and Breckfield areas of North Liverpool to develop communal gardens in wasteland sites,[486] it has demonstrated a commitment to the regeneration of the concept of community and the individuals of which these communities comprise.

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[484] See DCMS and BIS 2009
[485] Kelly (2002), "Case Study 02: Community Worker," p.15
[486] tenantspin (2010), *What We Do* (Online)

Delivering a project of this nature is not without its problems, however, and it can be argued that by constantly raising questions like the ones outlined above, *tenantspin* has failed to allow enough time to explore some of the answers. As with many of FACT's projects, the level of output is high and being under such intense time pressure, due to short-term funding, has meant that useful evaluation is rarely undertaken. This raises the risk of the impact of *tenantspin* being lost, particularly as many of the participants are elderly, a problem which is exacerbated by the pressures of funding on the project, which has always been obtained on a relatively short timeframe. Furthermore, the funders of community arts projects often place demands on organisations to demonstrate that they are meeting certain criteria, particularly those of reaching as many people as possible. Consequently, despite claims by *tenantspin* that it feels a "'moral' obligation"[487] to involve as many participants as possible, it is more likely that these demands are made by funders. Both Alan Dunn and one of his successors, Patrick Fox, stated concerns that the objectives outlined by funders continue to miss the point of collaborative community projects[488] and, as such, any attempts to prioritise an ethos of quality over quantity, whilst undoubtedly more important for the individual participants, are likely to be compromised.

tenantspin's attempts to create a project which prioritised community participation can be understood as genuinely collaborative and was done with the intention of creating a model of community practice that could be applied elsewhere.[489] Whilst Superflex launched many other *Superchannels* around the world, they did not succeed in creating a global network that included Liverpool's *Superchannel* or was united by the same underlying values. However, Liverpool's *Superchannel* "developed into a longer term, city-wide project"[490] and *tenantspin*, which is unique in its purpose and function, arguably operates so effectively because of its uniqueness to Liverpool. Attempts were made to develop the initial project into a model that could be applied elsewhere, through the publication in 2002 of a handbook entitled *Supermanual*,[491] but Alan Dunn expressed concerns about the feasibility

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[487] tenantspin (2012), *History* (Online)

[488] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010; Fox, interviewed by the author, 12 August 2010

[489] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Evaluation Report*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16)); *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[490] *Superchannel: The Tower Block, Project Outline*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Inactive Superchannel (CP.16))

[491] See Brewster 2002

of adapting the idea to places without the socio-economic and political conditions of Liverpool, stating that it was "the energy and the quirkiness" of the component parts of *tenantspin* that all came together at the turn of the century to make the project what it was.[492] He identified the collaborative partners, politicised participants, socio-economic conditions, history of grassroots practice and the enthusiasm and pragmatism of the staff involved, as central to the project, and it has been its openness to change that has enabled the project to survive.

2.2.5 Lessons from the Collaboration Programme

As with many of FACT's endeavours, the Collaboration Programme was launched before a long-term strategy had been developed and this can perhaps be seen as beneficial to the project. Although its origins were in the Video Positive festival, the Collaboration Programme has been fully integrated into the organisation and has lasted far beyond Video Positive itself. The purpose for which it was introduced to Video Positive instilled an ethos of prioritising the local community and ensured the organisation's relevance to them, but it also placed community arts and the production of artworks at the heart of the Collaboration Programme vision. The Collaboration Programme for Video Positive created artworks that were displayed in the public realm, such as on big screens in shopping areas, and this innovative use of the public art concept, together with increased numbers of visitors to the city, encouraged investment by key stakeholders which included the city's residents. The Collaboration Programme, as with its parent organisation, has been particularly adept at positioning itself within reach of a number of different funding opportunities across several sectors, and this has enabled relationships to develop with a number of regular funders. For FACT, the Collaboration Programme remains a valuable part of its offer because it provides both the traditional education package that is expected of museums and galleries, but also runs schemes that appeal more widely to the charitable sector. This allows FACT to develop, through its exhibition programme, a "critical context of languages, technologies, philosophies and artistic processes"[493] whilst also satisfying the criteria of its regular funders, such as the Arts Council England (ACE).

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[492] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010
[493] *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations Appendices R1-7 (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999)

However, if community arts have been debated as an opportunity to challenge the entrenched political system, or as an outlet for the disenfranchised, the fact that the money and assessment of the project's value originates from the system which is being challenged, is inherently problematic. The community arts movement has been described as a "naive, but energetic, activism" which, by being so reliant on external funding, has "drifted into the arms of those groups it set out to oppose."[494] Furthermore, Owen Kelly suggests that the arts are dominated by a belief that "it [is] better to do *anything* than to risk doing nothing," but this has engendered an attitude of taking any available money, irrespective of the cost to an organisation's integrity.[495] In many ways this attitude is reflected by FACT, an organisation which was similarly naive in its early days, and it can be seen as having developed at a pace that was dictated by government policy and funding objectives, both of which affect the subject matter it tackles.

FACT cannot be accused, however, of a lack of awareness of the limitations of being so reliant on public funding, and in 2002 it expressed concerns about the effect of short-term budgeting on the Collaboration Programme. It stated that short-term funding leads to a lack of continuity, a potential lack of focus as funding applications make claims that are too ambitious in an attempt to secure funding, and an inability to develop a long-term strategy for future programming.[496] These challenges are exacerbated by the conditions placed on art organisations by their funders who increasingly demand evidence that their funding has a quantifiable impact on the people participating in art projects.[497] The issue of quality not quantity was addressed in relation to the *tenantspin* project, and demonstrating that art projects attract a large numbers of participants is particularly difficult as community arts tend to take place outside the gallery and, therefore, traditional measures such as footfall cannot be relied upon.

In 2008 an attempt was made to host an exhibition that heralded the collaborative work that has taken place across Liverpool. 'The Fifth Floor' exhibition was held at Tate Liverpool,

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[494] Kelly (1984), *Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels*, p.97
[495] ibid.
[496] *CP-Interactive Project: Using New Technologies to Create Art with People*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1, Folder – Grant Archive 3)
[497] Fox, interviewed by the author, 12 August 2010; Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010

and *tenantspin* provided a broadcast studio that saw debates streamed live directly from the gallery throughout the show.
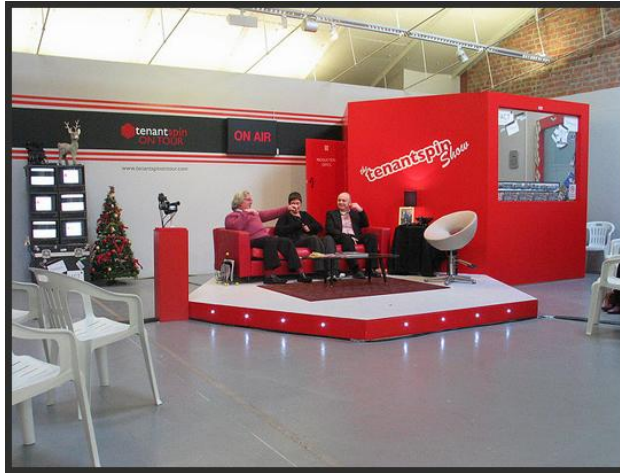

Fig. 2.2.9 *tenantspin* studio at The Fifth Floor exhibition, Tate Liverpool, 2008–2009

However, the exhibition experienced similar issues relating to interactivity that have characterised the history of media art in the gallery, and which are discussed in Section 2.3.1. Interactive exhibitions continue to be compromised by the actions of audiences who have been conditioned to behave in a certain way within the gallery, and interactive artworks continue to pose a challenge to this behaviour. Consequently, whilst The Fifth Floor aimed to "integrate a wider, more representative range of cultural values alongside those values already established in the museum,"[498] the entrenched behaviour of audiences within a traditional gallery framework was difficult to overcome. Furthermore, by placing *tenantspin* within the gallery and away from the community from which it has grown, the project was removed from its context and imbued with an arm's length sense of disengagement that diluted its meaning. Similarly, taking snapshots of the work that is produced by community arts projects increases the risks of the outcomes being impossible to interpret and can, therefore, diminish the impact they have. The problem this causes may be closely linked to the ineffectiveness of participatory methods within museums and galleries more broadly, and whilst interaction is considered to be important, it remains inadequately defined. This was again demonstrated in 2011 with FACT's first exhibition of Collaboration Programme projects, 'Knowledge Lives Everywhere.'[499]

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[498] McKane (2009), "*The Fifth Floor*: Elevating Social Responsibility in the Public Art Museum," p.56
[499] *Knowledge Lives Everywhere* was held at FACT from 1 April to 12 June 2011

Fig. 2.2.10 Gallery 1, FACT, during Knowledge Lives Everywhere, 2011

Fig. 2.2.11 Poster for Knowledge Lives Everywhere, FACT, 2011

Although the exhibition falls outside the timeframe of this thesis, it is important to note that the same problems encountered by The Fifth Floor existed at Knowledge Lives Everywhere. Prior to this, Alan Dunn stated concerns that *tenantspin* continued to struggle to assert a presence in the FACT Centre,[500] and by remaining outside the gallery, has created a feeling of separation from FACT which is in turn perceived by audiences and participants alike.

The existence beyond the gallery of community arts raises a final question of whether projects of this nature can be truly understood as *art*, a dilemma which applies to the artists, art organisations and funders who deliver such projects. The problem is exacerbated by the notion of art continuing to be an alienating concept, and whilst progress has been made in recent years, there is still room for further improvement. However, it is interesting to note that the question of whether a collaborative project is art, is of little relevance to those directly involved, and FACT has not shied away from this question themselves. In the exhibition catalogue of Video Positive 1995, Moviola stated that the work produced by the Collaboration Programme:

> Has kicked up a whole range of questions and challenges for the festival and often caused an uneasy tension, not least between the work that it produces and the commissioned work exhibited in the rest of the festival programme. However, this disjunction is a positive force as it continually challenges us to ask fundamental questions about what art is, who make it and for whom.[501]

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[500] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010

[501] Haskel, L. and Faull, L. (eds.) (1995), *Video Positive 95 Catalogue*, Liverpool: Liverpool, p.38

That the art world, and particularly its funding structures, fails to account for this in their evaluation requirements, only reinforces the earlier assertion that funding bodies continue to misunderstand community arts projects. Consequently, when Hope and Carrington identify *tenantspin* as a landmark project that has transformed the cultural landscape of Liverpool,[502] it is not an assertion based on the quality of the art that it has produced, but because they recognise the importance of the approach of the *tenantspin* collaborators and their vehement defence of its core aims.

Alan Dunn also demonstrated this attitude, which infused his work with *tenantspin*, by stating that it is irrelevant how the outcome of a collaborative project is perceived. Instead, he identified the important factor as being the process of collaboration itself,[503] aims which are supported by the prioritisation of processes of engagement that have infused the work of FACT since its inception as Merseyside Moviola. By committing to engagement, however, it is essential that the motives are underpinned by a genuine belief in its value.

> We must engage people because we believe in doing so, because they have something to offer the art world and because we trust them enough to invest in them. We trust them with sets of new ideas. People are engaging with institutions because new ideas are of extremely high value and they are engaging because new ideas can be experienced individually, in groups of three in the park, or in packs of bus passengers.[504]

For this to happen, Alan Dunn states the importance of understanding that there is a place for engagement and, similarly, that there is a time "not to be engaged."[505] This is not without complexity, however, and the frequent adoption of terms such as 'community,' 'engagement' and 'participation' shows that FACT have yet to adequately define the terms itself, and instead yields to whatever is modish at any given time and is, therefore, an important keyword on funding applications.

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[502] Hope and Carrington (2007), "Alan Dunn, tenantspin," p.259
[503] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010. See also Reiss 2007
[504] Dunn (2004), "Who Needs a Spin Doctor? Part Two," p.24
[505] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010

2.3 Media: Moving Image Touring & Exhibition Service

> *New media art seems to call for a 'ubiquitous museum' or 'museum without walls,' a parallel, distributed, living information space that is open to artistic interference*[506]

2.3.1 Presenting Media Art

Media art places certain demands on artists and curators, with regard to its production and display that are very particular to its individual practices. Often requiring different technology, much of which is very costly, media art has struggled to establish a place for itself within the contemporary gallery system, and thus remains somewhat on the periphery of institutionalised art practice, despite having its origins over fifty years ago. As with the practice more broadly, British media art developed in art schools – institutions which were able to purchase expensive technology and provide essential access to equipment and editing facilities. Despite this clear association with one aspect of the institutions of art, media art remains somewhat on the periphery of institutionalised art history which is conservative and traditional at its heart. The consequence of this is an absence of rigorous study in the field of media art, with it being seen more as an extension of film and television, two practices which, despite their long histories, both remain outside the gallery.[507]

However, since the 1970s, funding bodies such as the ACGB have offered support for media art and, therefore, some examination of the reasons why it has remained outside the gallery must be provided. With media artworks frequently being installation pieces, media art has been more frequently shown in dedicated events, such as Video Positive, which have enabled the practice to gain greater exposure. These events have served to establish media art within a particular context, however, rather than integrating it into the existing

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[506] Paul, C. (2008), "Challenges for a Ubiquitous Museum: From the White Cube to the Black Box and Beyond" in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, ed. C. Paul, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of CA Press, pp.53-75 (p.53)

[507] Cubitt 1993

museum framework, and it is perhaps more accurate to identify the digital revolution of the 1990s as the most influential factor in the increasing exposure of media art.[508] Throughout the 1990s there has been a significant increase in the amount of technology in our everyday lives and this has led to a greater familiarity with the technology available for making art. The astonishing rise to near-ubiquity of technology in the Western world is most clearly witnessed with the spread of the Internet,[509] and alongside the infiltration of computers into many Western homes, there is increasing familiarity with the processes of media art. Further technological developments have also enabled many more art practices to be subsumed by the umbrella term although, as with the Internet, this is significantly skewed in favour of the West. Increased familiarity and incontrovertible improvement in the quality and reliability of the technologies employed by media artists has not, however, been to an extent that the most fundamental issue of media art presentation has been overcome. Technology is fallible, and whilst curators and artists may be more skilled at using it, there is a significant issue surrounding the display of media artworks when exhibitions are susceptible to being rendered 'out of order.'[510] This is not a problem that is presented by paintings or sculpture, and short of theft or damage, an exhibition of conventional art forms does not carry the same risks as one of media art.

The preference for presenting media art in an event context can be attributed to the fact that media artworks, especially those which include moving image and sound, have different requirements for presentation to static art forms such as painting and sculpture. Writing in the late 1970s, Brian O'Doherty published a book entitled *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1976). In this he depicts an 'ideal' gallery which "subtracts from the art work all cues that interfere with the fact that it is 'art,'" thus creating a modernist space which is at once formal, mysterious and sacred.[511]

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[508] Dixon (2007), *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, p.87. See also Goodman 1990

[509] The first proposal for the World Wide Web was written by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 and released in 1991, and the first commercial Web browser was launched in 1994 by the Netscape Corporation (Tribe and Jana (2006), *New Media Art*, p.6)

[510] Paul (2008), "Challenges for a Ubiquitous Museum: From the White Cube to the Black Box and Beyond," p.68

[511] O'Doherty, B. (1976; 1986), *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p.14

> A gallery is constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church. The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically.[512]

The theory of the white cube has been widely embraced by museums and art galleries to the extent that they became, during the twentieth century, almost ubiquitous.[513] The picture painted by O'Doherty is instantly recognisable and conjures memories of walking through pristine and echoing spaces which, as soon as a sound is made, are fundamentally altered.

Fig. 2.3.1 An example of the 'white cube,' White Cube gallery, Bermondsey, London

The spaces depicted here are almost entirely unsuited to moving image works, which often require dimly lit spaces and reasonable acoustics in order for the artworks to be displayed adequately. Furthermore, media artworks frequently require longer viewing times and interactivity from the audience and, as such, contravene the typical gallery behaviours that are engendered by audiences entering the white cube.

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[512] ibid., p.15

[513] Balsom, E. (2009), "A Cinema in the Gallery, a Cinema in Ruins," *Screen*, vol.50 no.4, pp.411-427 (p.414)

By the 1990s, however, there was something of an increase in the amount of media art that was present in white cube galleries, and Liz Kotz states that this began with larger installation pieces being integrated into exhibitions in much the same way that sculpture is displayed. However, moving image artworks tended to "remain marginalised in physically segregated 'screenings,'"[514] which itself led to the development of a new model for galleries. In direct contrast to the white cube, black box galleries emerged as almost entirely unlit spaces which had more in common with commercial cinemas than typical art galleries. Kotz suggests that the integration of black box galleries for moving image works demonstrates the assimilation of media art into the art institutional framework,[515] although the magnitude of the difference from white cubes, and the need to create the black box model at all, suggests that media art continues to be isolated from other exhibitions. This is not to say that black box galleries have not been integrated into the art institutional framework, however, and a number of museums, or rather media centres, have opened which contain only black box gallery spaces. As with the FACT Centre and the new BFI Southbank building, both developed under the guidance of Eddie Berg, these institutions are specifically intended for the display of digital and analogue moving image works and, as such, provide a solution for curators who have previously found media art to "confound traditional museological approaches."[516]

Fig. 2.3.2 A black box gallery at the FACT Centre during *The Republic of the Moon*, 2011–2012

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[514] Kotz, L. (2005), "Video Projection: The Space Between Screens" in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds. Z. Kocur and S. Leung, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp.101-115 (p.101)
[515] ibid., p.106
[516] Rinehart, R. (2007), "The Media Art Notation System: Documenting and Preserving Digital/Media Art," *LEONARDO,* vol.40, no.2, pp.181-187 (p.181)

These new institutions devoted to media art can be seen as specifically intending to enable the better presentation of media artworks, although they rely on the assumption that media artworks are cinematic, and thus fail to account for the diversity of media art practices that have emerged as a consequence of technological change. Furthermore, black box galleries are not without challenge, not least because they can be intimidating spaces that do not draw audiences in, and are, therefore, not necessarily any more inclusive than traditional art galleries.

2.3.2 Funding and Policy

As suggested above, the development of media art was intrinsically linked to art schools investing in the necessary equipment for its production, and following its inclusion into the arts curriculum, there was a significant rise in the number of artists using media technology. Piecemeal funding for such artists was made available by the ACGB during the 1970s through, amongst others, the Artists' Film and Video Committee (AFVC), but it was not until 1986 that the ACGB's funding for media art was formalised with the creation of the FVB department. David Curtis, who had been involved in film and video art throughout his career and had sat on the AFVC since its launch in 1973,[517] became particularly important to the history of media art and, subsequently, FACT. Having joined the ACGB as Film Officer in 1977, Curtis was involved in their touring programme for moving image works and within the FVB, he was instrumental in the development of the Video Positive model. Furthermore, by the early 1990s, after the ACGB's touring programme had come to an end, the FVB was allocated a sum of money for capital investment which was ultimately used to support media art production and display. As a leading media art agency at this time, Curtis approached Moviola to develop a plan for the capital investment,[518] and by 1992 a model for a pool of resources was returned to the ACGB by Eddie Berg and his colleague Clive Gillman.[519]

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[517] Curtis, D. (British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection, formerly Film Officer, Arts Council England), interviewed by the author, 24 March 2010
[518] *Board Meeting Minutes, 09 November 1993*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1992-1993)
[519] Curtis, interviewed by the author, 24 March 2010

Coinciding with the availability of capital funds, the ACGB and Museums and Galleries Commission published *Very Spaghetti: The Potential of Interactive Multimedia in Art Galleries* (1992), a series of reports by former Director of Tate Liverpool, Richard Francis, and Colin Grigg, Sandy Nairne and Isobel Pring, that discussed the importance of integrating interactive multimedia into Britain's galleries. Although they defined interactive multimedia as primarily useful to documentation and education, and the report does not specifically refer to media artworks, the technology and training to which they refer is undoubtedly of relevance here. Richard Francis depicts a changing environment which has seen interactive tools infiltrating everyday lives through computers and television,[520] and he considers interactive multimedia as a means of creating a better connected network of communications between gallery collections, staff and audiences.[521]

However, Sandy Nairne's report on interactivity in American museums and galleries demonstrates a considerable lack of progress because it remained focused on the application of multimedia in art as a means of reproducing existing artworks, rather than producing of new ones,[522] an idea that refers back to Walter Benjamin's seminal essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936).[523] This demonstrates that, just as the report seems extremely dated on examination twenty years later, even by the early 1990s the contemporary art world was still not accepting of media art as part of their main offer. Nevertheless, in pursuit of a better network of interactivity, the report outlines a number of recommendations for art funders and museums to assist in the integration of interactive multimedia in the gallery. These recommendations were to:

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[520] Francis et al 1992

[521] Francis, R. (1992), "Very Spaghetti" in *Very Spaghetti: The Potential of Interactive Multimedia in Museums and Art Galleries*, eds. R. Francis et al, London: Arts Council, pp.7-17 (p.11)

[522] Nairne, S. (1992), "Multimedia in American Art Museums" in *Very Spaghetti: The Potential of Interactive Multimedia in Museums and Art Galleries*, eds. R. Francis et al, London: Arts Council, pp.18-25 (p.20)

[523] See Benjamin 1936

1. Integrate the cataloguing and interpretation of all materials
2. Integrate curatorial, educational and collection management roles with reference to multimedia and plan development in conjunction with a museum's publication and broadcast policies
3. Provide and service with training and workshops a group of curators and other gallery specialists
4. Encourage the development of an installed base of applications running within and outside museums and the creation of several titles for distribution
5. Investigate jointly copyright protection with copyright societies, lawyers and producers
6. Establish and fund over the next five years a 'national development programme'[524]

Of particular interest here are points 3, 4 and 6, and it was in response to these that Clive Gillman developed a training course called 'Spaghetti without Tears' which address some of the issues raised by the *Very Spaghetti* report.[525]   Introducing a training programme specifically targeting media art production and display was an integral part of the history of media art in the gallery because it gave the curators and artists who had not been exposed to media technologies during their own education an opportunity to gain additional knowledge for their future practice.

2.3.3 A History of MITES

'Spaghetti without Tears' was developed as part of a broader idea for providing support to artists and galleries working with media technologies and throughout its own history Moviola had become well attuned to the range of problems presented by making and exhibiting media art, as well as relying heavily on loaned technology for early screenings and the first two Video Positive festivals.[526] This recognition that artists and art galleries needed to have easy access to technological equipment led to the establishment of the Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES) in April 1992 following discussions with the ACGB that can be traced to September 1991.[527] Clive Gillman was the architect of the project and envisaged a service that would not only provide equipment for other

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[524] ibid., p.3
[525] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010
[526] Berg (2003a), "Video Positive '89," p.11; Haskel, interviewed by the author, 21 January 2010
[527] *Moviola: A Development Agency, Board Papers 12 March 1992*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1992-1993)

galleries, but could offer technical support for those accessing the service. He also stated a desire to offer training courses and workshops for curatorial staff, and to undertake cutting edge research and development of media technologies.[528]

Clive Gillman joined Moviola on a freelance basis prior to Video Positive 1991 having previously worked with London Video Arts (LVA). LVA had been supporting media artists during the 1980s by hiring its video editing suite, although its services were more suited to artists than curators.[529] In a handwritten fax sent by Gillman to Eddie Berg in September 1991, Gillman outlined a threefold vision for the service, namely the provision of direct technical support for galleries, training and education, and research and development.[530] Following a short period of refinement, the service launched in 1992 with six aims, which were:

1. To provide access to subsidised audio/visual exhibition resources for curators and artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art
2. To provide an advice service for curators and artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art
3. To provide access to technical support services for curators and artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art
4. To provide training opportunities for exhibitors and artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art
5. To provide video documentation service for exhibitors and artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art
6. To provide a research and development platform for the investigation and exploitation of new technologies for artists working with the touring and exhibition of moving image art[531]

Funding for the project, however, was reserved for capital investment and although these aims demonstrate that Gillman was keen to integrate a research and development strand,

[528] Gillman, C., *Handwritten fax to Eddie Berg, 25 September 1991*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Funding and Grants 1, Folder – ACE 1991)
[529] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010
[530] ibid.
[531] *Key Mission of MITES, Board Papers 18 June 1992,* (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1992-1993)

it was in the creation of an "extensive equipment resource pool,"[532] and an associated training programme, that MITES focused its energies.

MITES was built around a central ethos that "skill and advice are not a luxury,"[533] and as the first service of its kind in Britain,[534] it played a significant role in introducing media artworks to the gallery system. This ethos contributed to Moviola using MITES to:

> Assist in the development of a climate in which exhibitors have the confidence to make bold, radical programming decisions with the firm knowledge that these decisions can be supported by the necessary skills and resources.[535]

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, Moviola was attempting to deliver a programme of this nature through the Video Positive festivals, and by the end of the Video Positive era, MITES was established as "a unique national resource" which was unrivalled despite criticisms that it was not located in London.[536] Nevertheless, by the end of the 1990s, FACT claimed that MITES had supported over 600 artists and exhibitors, provided technology for nearly 300 exhibitions,[537] and in so doing, had worked with 95% of all exhibitions which used new technologies from 1992–1998.[538] Evidence to support FACT's claims is not available in its archive, although Gillman states that MITES had a "near monopoly on providing exhibition technology" in the 1990s.[539] According to documentation in his personal archive, in 2001/02 the service supported almost 120 projects, including working with renowned artists such as Carolee Schneeman and Gillian Wearing, galleries such as Tate Britain and the Whitechapel Gallery in London, and other art organisations as far-reaching as Brighton,

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[532] *Moviola: A Development Agency, Board Papers 12 March 1992*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1992-1993)

[533] *The Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service Interim Report, January 1991*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Mail, Folder – MITES)

[534] Berg, E. (2003e), "Foreword" in *FACT Annual*, ed. E. Berg, M. Brewster and E. Oliver, Liverpool: FACT, pp.5-6 (p.6)

[535] *The Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service Interim Report, January 1991*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Mail, Folder – MITES)

[536] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

[537] Clive Gillman suggests that this figure may be a reflection of the number of individual hires rather than whole exhibitions, whereby five artists requiring support from MITES in a single show may have been counted as five projects (Gillman, C. (Director, Dundee Contemporary Arts, former Lead Artist and Associate Director, FACT) email message to the author, 25 June 2012)

[538] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000)

[539] *MITES Self-Assessment: 2001/02*, (Available: Clive Gillman's Personal Archive); Gillman, email message to the author, 25 June 2012

Edinburgh, Norwich and Burnley. By 2003, Gillman claims that MITES had celebrated its thousandth hire.[540]

2.3.4 Impact and Future Prospects

Without further information, verifying these statistics and therefore ascertaining the value of a scheme of this nature, both in the provision of access to resources and training, remains an open question as the developments occurred at the same time as other changes within media arts, both nationally and globally. However, the longevity of the MITES programme, and the apparent popularity of its rentals service, suggests that art institutions, curators and artists were keen to have access to the services MITES provided. The reliance of the early Video Positive festivals on loans and sponsorship for presentation equipment highlights the financial restraints on organisations which prevented them from accumulating, and continually updating, state-of-the-art technological equipment, especially in the volume required for large media events. The cost of equipment is a contributing factor behind the absence of media art in British galleries, although Gillman also stated that art organisations were "terrified" of the technology required for media art exhibition at this time.[541] Without customer feedback, it is difficult to prove the influence of MITES during a period of significant growth in output and popularity of media art practice, but the fact that there was no other organisation offering a similar service to MITES, and a dearth of training courses for people involved in developing exhibitions, suggests that the service was integral to the demystification of technology and its application in art at that time. Furthermore, FACT still provides a rental service which is well subscribed today, and this demonstrates that even with cheaper and more readily available technology, there is still a demand for technological support.

The lower cost of purchasing technology raises an interesting dilemma for MITES, however, and poses a threat to the future of the programme. The provision of a service that promotes greater infiltration of media art into galleries and trains people to be self-sufficient when utilising technology reduces, over a period of time, the potential market for

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[540] Gillman, email message to the author, 25 June 2012
[541] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

the service. Furthermore, this problem was exacerbated by cheaper and more readily available technology, a dilemma that was demonstrated by MITES' investment in a DVD Mastering Suite which, whilst one of its flagship services, initially cost the organisation over £10,000 in the 1990s and was rendered effectively obsolete by the end of the decade as the technology had become increasingly integrated into home computer hardware.[542] Nevertheless, MITES, now listed simply as 'Services' on FACT's website,[543] is still primarily concerned with equipment hire and video production which demonstrates that the organisation has not felt the need to shift its focus to the other aims outlined in 1992. However, a re-launched training programme which includes "one day taster sessions, in-depth master-classes and fully immersive technical sessions"[544] is currently being developed to build upon the foundations laid during the 1990s.

MITES' training programme, which saw 'Spaghetti without Tears' develop into the more diverse 'New Tools' programme, had offered further opportunities for gallery staff and artists to attend one-day and residential training courses for the application of technological equipment in exhibitions, and with continued financial support from the ACGB,[545] MITES claimed to have trained hundreds of people across the country[546] through "short workshops covering software tools, application areas and 'show & tell' masterclasses with hands-on sessions."[547] New Tools further evolved into the Institute for Technical Exhibition Management (ITEM), which launched in 2003, and responded to the changing media environment by aiming to "help define the evolution of the materials that the artists themselves were seeking to use."[548] ITEM provided highly skilled workers to assist with the installation of technically complex artworks,[549] and facilitated collaborations between artists and technologists to research the "development, presentation or experience of

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[542] ibid.

[543] FACT (2012c), *Services* (Online)

[544] FACT (2012d), *Training* (Online)

[545] Gillman, C. (1994), *Merseyside Multimedia: An Advocacy Document for the Arts and Cultural Industries of Liverpool*. (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Ed's Office), Section 3.1.3

[546] *Business Plan: Draft Update 1997/98, Board Meeting Minutes 30 October 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1; Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997)

[547] Gillman, C., *FACT Structural Programme*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board Archive 2, Folder – Board Reports, August 2002-May 2003, all departments)

[548] Gillman, C. (2006), "Foreword" in *Research – The Itemisation of Creative Knowledge*, ed. C. Gillman, Liverpool: FACT and Liverpool University Press, pp.8-9 (p.8)

[549] *AGM Board Papers, 26 November 2001*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)

cultural exhibitions."[550] It responded directly to the notion that interdisciplinary research was at the heart of media art practice, which was demonstrated by the project being funded by the ACE and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta).[551] This shows how FACT, as with its rebranding exercise in 1997, had prudently positioned itself at the intersection of a number of different funding opportunities.[552] However, the project was conflicted by the ethos instilled by Gillman that MITES should be a non-profit service,[553] which ultimately hampered the opportunity for research and development as this requires higher levels of investment than could be obtained from public funding bodies with limited budgets. Consequently, following MITES' lack of research and development work when it was first established, the organisation has struggled to keep pace with the commercial market, an issue that has been further exacerbated by the pace of change that exists in technological innovation.

Those involved in setting up MITES appeared to take great pride in the work the service has provided, and in the business plan of 1999, FACT defined MITES as "one of the most successful public sector resource operations of recent times."[554] However, without access to customer information from MITES' earlier years, or adequate documentation within the archive, the success of the service – apart from its longevity – is hard to establish. Furthermore, as with both Video Positive and the Collaboration Programme, MITES developed an identity that was independent of FACT, and although it was integrated into the FACT Centre's new Structural Programme, it maintained an independence from its parent company, in both branding and remit, which prevented it from being fully understood as part of FACT's offer.[555] This independence may have enabled MITES to develop at its own pace, but it came at the cost of a level of separation which ultimately impeded its survival as a cohesive service, so that it has now effectively been disbanded into a range of individual components in much the same way as the Collaboration Programme.

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[550] Gillman, C., *FACT Structural Programme*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board Archive 2, Folder – Board Reports, August 2002-May 2003, all departments)
[551] Gillman (2006), "Foreword," p.8
[552] See Chapter 3.1
[553] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010
[554] *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive: Box – Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999)
[555] *Moviola Business Plan 1992-1995*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1)

3.   FACT's Identity and Impact

3.1 Institution: Building the FACT Brand

> *Brands are pervasive and ubiquitous. We take them for granted –
> from pop art to McDonald's, from Starbucks to Greenpeace,
> brands are the mechanism that connects organisations and
> people.*[556]

3.1.1 Rebranding Moviola

Giles Gibbons states that "brands are the promise of something,"[557] and without a successful brand he warns that there is:

> No way to create mass customer loyalty; no customer loyalty: no
> guarantee of reliable earnings; no reliable earnings: less
> investment and employment; less investment and employment:
> less wealth created; less wealth created: lower government
> receipts to spend on social goods.[558]

This analysis clearly implies that branding is intrinsically linked to economic potential, and although this thesis concerns a non-profit organisation, the need for successful branding is essentially the same as Moviola operated as a publicly-funded body. In this case, branding is used to appeal to the emotions of potential funders and audiences, and the brand becomes the "new axis that connects production and consumption."[559]

For non-profit organisations, however, the economic potential of a brand is secondary to the brand's function as a "conveyor of information"[560] and, as has been shown in Part 2, Moviola's functions had expanded significantly since the mid-1980s. A *moviola* is "a device which reproduces the picture and sound of a film on a small scale, to allow checking and editing."[561] Having worked specifically with film and video projection in Merseyside when the organisation first launched in 1985, the name Merseyside Moviola was well suited, but

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[556] Kornberger, M. (2010), *Brand Society,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.263-264
[557] Gibbons, G. (2009), "The Social Value of Brands" in *Brands and Branding*, ed. R. Clifton, London: Profile Books, pp.45-60 (p.45)
[558] ibid.
[559] Kornberger (2010), *Brand Society*, p.12
[560] Lindemann, J. (2010), *The Economy of Brands,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p.5
[561] Oxford English Dictionary (2003), *Moviola, n.* (Online)

as the organisation developed and diversified, Moviola's identity became less apparent in relation to its name.[562] As Eddie Berg attempted to develop a national and international profile for the organisation, the regional prefix was dropped, and throughout the 1990s, Moviola's activities increased in both number and ambition. Berg identified Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme and Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES) as the organisation's "core 'brands,'" but each of these brands had a distinct identity and field of operation that existed beyond the brand of Moviola. In the *Factors* (2003) publications, he identified 1995 as the year that Moviola saw the need to unite each of these activities in an attempt:

> To establish our own space, to tell our own story, to provide facilities and resources to more effectively and pro-actively support practice and ideas and create a more measured and strategic approach to infrastructural support.[563]

It was asserted that this could be achieved by the organisation using its brand as a tool for defining Moviola's identity, as well as guiding future development and connecting this future to a history of progress and innovation.
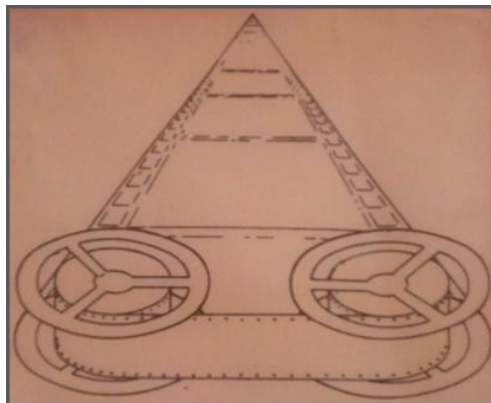
(L) Fig. 3.1.1 Merseyside Moviola logo, 1985

(R) Fig. 3.1.2 Moviola logo, 1989

Berg's claims of his awareness of the need to unite Moviola's sub-brands was made with hindsight, however, and it is important to note that in March 1996, Moviola received a letter from Magnasync/Moviola[564] in the USA threatening legal action should Merseyside

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[562] Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010
[563] Berg (2003b), "95: Building Blocks," pp.10-11
[564] See Moviola (2011), *Moviola* (Online)

Moviola continue to use their trademarked name.[565] This threat of legal action forced the organisation to undergo a process of rebranding which coincided with its increasing focus on the development of a building that would accommodate its various functions. The rebrand has subsequently been depicted as a conscious decision to develop "a consistent corporate identity which communicates the full range of company activity,"[566] and although the process was initially imposed upon them, Moviola used it as an opportunity to reconsider its activities and outputs. The rebranding process was, therefore, a pivotal shift in the profile and identity of the organisation.

The first stage of the process was selecting a new name for Moviola and, as part of this, the Board wanted to reflect the:

> Shifts in digital technologies, the expanded portfolio of artists projects using new technologies and the wider context in which new technology based work is produced, distributed and exhibited.[567]

The ensuing brainstorming sessions that were reportedly undertaken by those involved with Moviola[568] are not documented in the archive, but the chosen name, the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, and its acronym FACT, reveals certain elements of the decision-making process. In arts and culture, a *foundation* is more often an organisation that has been established by an endowment,[569] and although this was not the case for FACT, Eddie Berg stated that he was particularly keen to use this terminology, before the name or acronym had been decided upon, because it "implies permanence."[570] The term also has overtones which reflect the process of commercialisation and professionalisation that was occurring throughout arts and culture in the 1990s, and FACT's Board selected the

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[565] *Discussion Notes for Board Meeting, 27 March 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997); *Board Meeting Minutes, 27 March 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997)

[566] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000), p.15

[567] *Board Meeting Minutes, 27 March 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997)

[568] Biggs, interviewed by the author, 25 January 2011; Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010; Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

[569] Oxford English Dictionary (1989b), *Foundation, n.* (Online)

[570] *AGM Board Papers, 26 November 2001*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002). See also Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010

name because of its suitability for an organisation with a building, a project which was being discussed at this time.[571]

Fig. 3.1.3 FACT logo, 1997   **Fig. 3.1.4** FACT logo, 2010

As ambiguous as the term is, however, the inclusion of both *art* and *creative technology* within the organisation's title explicitly states the range of interests and activities that had been adopted by Moviola throughout the 1990s. As previously discussed, Moviola focused on moving image artworks and, irrespective of its evolving identity, the organisation was keen to assert its position as an art organisation. The inclusion of *creative technology* is particularly interesting, and Board member Sean Cubitt stated that its inclusion demonstrated "a degree of opportunism...[because] we wanted to be able to attract funding not only from art agencies but from far richer funds available to science and technology."[572] The rebranding process was, therefore, intrinsically linked to increasing the economic potential of FACT by maximising opportunities for funding, thus connecting it to traditional branding practice. Since the FACT brand was launched, the organisation has received additional funding from funding bodies that had not previously supported Moviola, and which are more traditionally aligned with science and technology, such as the Wellcome Trust and Nesta. As such, the new name can be seen as successful in placing the organisation at the cross-section of art and technology, and although the decision to rebrand Moviola was enforced, it was approached by a politically savvy Board that was

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[571] ibid.

[572] Cubitt, S. (2009b), "Creative Technology" in *We Are The Real-Time Experiment*, ed. FACT, FACT and Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.30-33 (p.31)

keen to establish FACT at the junction of the traditionally disparate worlds of art, science and technology.[573] At the time, Eddie Berg noted that rebranding the organisation was:

> Not merely desirable but absolutely necessary if we are to benefit from the shifting structures of national funding policies both in relation to film and video and so called 'new technology' based work and to locate ourselves more visibly within the emerging landscapes of contemporary art and culture.[574]

3.1.2 New Labour, New Aims

The launch of the new brand took place in 1997, the same year that Tony Blair's Labour government was elected with a huge majority of 178.[575] The magnitude of this election result can be attributed to many factors, not least the length of time that the Conservative Party had held office prior to 1997, but also because the Labour Party had launched a refreshed image in the previous year's election manifesto. Sarah Hale states that "'New' Labour 'officially' came into being on 4 October 1994,"[576] three months after Tony Blair became leader of the Labour Party, and in 1996 they released their election manifesto, entitled *new Labour: because Britain deserves better*,[577] which saw the party reposition itself as "centre-left" and, therefore, offering an alternative to "the solutions of the old left and those of the Conservative right."[578]

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[573] *Discussion Notes for Board Meeting, 27 March 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997)
[574] *Board Meeting Minutes, 27 March 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1996-1997)
[575] Political Resources (2010), *UK General Election Results, May 1997* (Online)
[576] Hale, S. (2006), *Blair's Community: Communitarian Thought and New Labour,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.157
[577] Labour Party (1996), *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better* (Online)
[578] ibid.

Fig. 3.1.5 New Labour slogan on their pledge card, 1997

The new manifesto and image was presented as a modern vision of the party, and it was both sleek and professional, marking a significant departure from traditional British politics.

> We will be a radical government. But the definition of radicalism will not be that of doctrine, whether of left or right, but of achievement. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern.[579]

New Labour clearly committed themselves to the modernisation of British politics, and the government quickly established a Press Secretary role and appointed journalist Alastair Campbell to the position with a responsibility for managing the party's image.

Part of this new image was the government's alignment with 'Cool Britannia,' a slogan which was used to encapsulate contemporary "youth culture and musical celebrity,"[580] and celebrated the pop stars, fashion designers and young British artists (yBa) of the 1990s.[581] The end of the twentieth century was likened to the 1960s, and the March 1997 issue of pop culture magazine *Vanity Fair* was dedicated to the Cool Britannia phenomenon.

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[579] ibid.

[580] Pooke (2011), *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction*, p.1

[581] The yBa's were a group of over thirty contemporary artists, many of whom graduated from Goldsmiths at the end of the 1980s, and include Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and Rachel Whiteread

> As it was in the mid-60s, the British capital is a cultural trailblazer,
> teeming with new and youthful icons of art, pop music, fashion,
> food, and film. Even its politicians are cool. Or, well, coolish.[582]

In 1997 Blair embodied the idea of a 'coolish' politician, and shortly after his election

success, he hosted a party at 10 Downing Street for members of the Cool Britannia set.

Fig. 3.1.6 Front cover of the 'Cool Britannia' issue of *Vanity Fair*, March 1997

Although arguably more of PR stunt, this action signified the new era of modern politics and

asserted the commitment of the newly formed government to arts and culture. They had

outlined their commitment in their manifesto by pledging to reassert the importance of

culture in the economy as a means of creating a "sense of community, identity and civic

pride."[583] Once in government, they aimed to achieve this by restructuring and restyling

the Department of Heritage as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and by

integrating it fully with other government departments, New Labour claimed that this new

system of government would provide "joined-up solutions to joined-up problems."[584] The

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[582] Kamp, D. (1997), "London Swings! Again!," *Vanity Fair*, March 1997
[583] Labour Party (1996), *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better* (Online)
[584] Levitas, R. (2005), *The Inclusive Society?: Social Exclusion and New Labour,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p.193

integration of arts and culture was further supported by the Policy Action Team 10 report on social exclusion, *The Contribution of Sport and the Arts* (1999), which stated that:

> Arts and sport are not just an 'add-on' to regeneration work. They are fundamental to community involvement and ownership of any regeneration initiative when they offer means of positive engagement in tune with local interests.[585]

Although not outlined in the report, this approach served to validate the shifts in museum policy over the previous decades which had seen an emphasis on the importance of education, access and community programmes in everyday gallery practice.[586]

Through the DCMS, museums were used as a tool in the Labour government's "attack on poverty and social exclusion,"[587] and Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport from 1997–2001, stated his commitment to using culture and innovation because of:

> What it can mean to individuals in their own lives and morale, what it can mean to neighbourhoods and cities, what it can mean for jobs and a local economy, and what it can mean for the sense of self-worth of an entire area.[588]

The interconnectedness implied here, both of policy and its impact, was reflected in the government establishing a number of different groups, such the Creative Industries Task Force in 1997[589] and Nesta in 1998,[590] which brought together different policy areas in an attempt to encourage "access, excellence, education and economic value"[591] across arts

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[585] Policy Action Team 10 (1999), *The Contribution of Sports and the Arts*, London: DCMS, p.6. See also Long and Bramham 2006

[586] Tlili et al (2007), "New Labour's Socially Responsible Museum: Roles, Functions and Greater Expectations," p.270

[587] From the first annual Shaw Lecture, 'Arts and the Man: Culture, Creativity and Social Regeneration,' given at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield, January 14 1998 and published in Smith MP, Rt Hon Chris (1998), *Creative Britain,* London: Faber and Faber, p.139

[588] ibid.

[589] The Creative Industries Task Force comprised representatives from DCMS, Department of Trade and Industry and the Treasury and industry advisors (Humphreys, P. (2000), "New Labour Policies for the Media and the Arts" in *New Labour in Power*, eds. P.A. Lawler and D. Coates, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.221-239 (p.221); Hansard (1999), *Creative Industries Task Force, 3 March 1999*, vol.326, cc.741-5W

[590] See Nesta (2012), *Innovation in the UK – Nesta* (Online)

[591] Smith MP, Rt Hon Chris (1998), *Creative Britain*, p.2

and culture.   These initiatives led to an increased amount of funding for cultural organisations, and although there was greater demand on the delivery of "educational provision and partnerships with private and voluntary organisations,"[592] those that showed a willingness to respond to changing policy approaches stood to benefit considerably.

Developing the FACT brand in this context led to the most significant reworking of the organisation's aims since it had been formalised in the late 1980s. As stated in Section 3.1.1, one of the corollaries of the rebranding exercise was the implementation of a strategic vision that better integrated the different projects that were delivered by FACT throughout the year, and to build upon its early objective of "extend[ing] the range of opportunities for participation in and appreciation of film and video art/culture on Merseyside."[593]   The aims outlined by Merseyside Moviola at the end of the 1980s, in conjunction with this mission, focused primarily on exhibitions and the provision of professional advice and expertise, with one aim outlining an intention to work with community groups to "actively contribut[e] towards the provision of a framework for discussion and development of an alternative media culture."[594] By 1997, however, FACT's aims provided a more obvious reflection of the increased professionalisation of the arts and cultural sector,[595] and whilst demonstrating the process of change that it had undergone over the previous decade, it also showed that it had adopted terminology that was more in line with politicians and funders. FACT stated it would:

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[592] Buckingham and Jones (2001), "New Labour's Cultural Turn: Some Tensions in Contemporary Education and Cultural Policy," p.3

[593] *Merseyside Moviola: Aims, Strategies, Objectives*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1, Folder – Business Plans 1989-2000)

[594] Aims of Merseyside Moviola:
- Exhibition on Merseyside of the best of nationally and internationally produced work, past and present
- Providing high profile opportunities for exhibition of locally produced work, both on Merseyside and at national and international venues
- Providing opportunities for access to equipment and to professional and artistic expertise in projects such as artist in residencies and site specific community events
- Organising community and media education events, debates, workshops etc; thereby actively contributing towards the provision of a framework for discussion and development of an alternative media culture
- Acting as a resource for advice and information (ibid.)

[595] Appleton, J. (2007), "Museums for 'The People'?" in *Museums and their Communities*, ed. S. Watson, London and New York: Routledge, pp.114-126 (p.115)

- Be the national home in Liverpool for the presentation, production and development of moving image cultural practice; from cinema to the internet
- Provide audiences, communities, artists and cultural producers with access to excellence, innovation and creativity in programming, services, resources and facilities
- Establish and sustain an operational commitment to technical excellence, exceptional levels of comfort and the development of diverse and loyal audiences[596]

The second aim is most revealing because it shows an awareness within FACT of the policy changes that were taking place in 1997, and particularly reflects the ideas of Chris Smith which prioritised access and education within culture, and are outlined in *Creative Britain* (1998), a collection of his essays and speeches written during New Labour's first two years in government.[597]

3.1.3 From Agency to Institution

Evidently, the rebranding of Moviola marked a significant shift in the history of the organisation, and it signalled the increased integration of its individual outputs through the development of a stronger brand and more sophisticated business plan. However, FACT's current Director, Mike Stubbs, stated in 2010 that FACT was still described as an *adhocracy*,[598] a term which can be understood as meaning "a system of flexible and informal organization and management in place of rigid bureaucracy."[599] Stubbs stressed the importance of the organisation operating more like a business,[600] a statement which casts doubt on the efficacy of the comprehensive business plans produced in 1999, which

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[596] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.6
[597] See Smith 1998
[598] Stubbs, M. (Director, FACT), interviewed by the author, 7 January 2010
[599] Oxford English Dictionary (2011), *Adhocracy, n*. (Online)
[600] Stubbs, interviewed by the author, 7 January 2010

numbered five volumes and many more appendices.[601] That FACT was still operating as an adhocracy by 2010 can perhaps be attributed to the new brand having been developed whilst the organisation was still an art agency, which consequently imbued the new identity with the more flexible and malleable model associated with art agencies. An art agency can be understood as a commissioning body which works on a broad scope to produce and facilitate a range of art projects which are presented in various locations as they tend not to occupy their own dedicated exhibition space. Moviola, through its work with the Video Positive festivals in particular, functioned as one of very few national art agencies in the UK that focused on film and media art,[602] and relied heavily on collaboration with other partners as a consequence.

For Moviola, the art agency model had worked well because it was more accommodating of the different branches of operation that existed, and despite claims that the new brand would "ensure a consistent corporate identity,"[603] FACT remained committed to maintaining its agency role.[604] Furthermore, each of the sub-brands that were incorporated into FACT – Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme and MITES – had strong independent identities, thus threatening the intended coherence of the new name. This was further demonstrated by the *tenantspin* project, which launched in 1999, developing an equally strong independent identity which remains somewhat separate from FACT today. However, the threat of legal action which forced the rebranding process coincided

[601] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: History and Context (The Green Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: History and Context Appendices (The Green Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: Transition (The Orange Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations Appendices R1-7 (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations Appendices R15-18 (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999); *FACT Centre: Finance (The Black Book),* (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999)
[602] *FACT Centre: History and Context (The Green Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.1
[603] *Foundation for Art & Creative Technology Business Plan: Update (1997/98)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – Business Plans 1997-2000), p.15
[604] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.11

with some major changes to the organisation, with 1997 also being the year that FACT began to actively pursue funding for the development of its own premises. Although discussions for this had started in the early 1990s, it was only with the opening of the FACT Centre in 2003 that the framework of the organisation was altered on a fundamental level, transforming FACT from an agency with occasional bursts of intense activity, to something more akin to traditional museums and art galleries. This new structure had to fit the FACT brand and, in turn, the calendar of year-round exhibitions within the FACT Centre were supported by the Collaboration Programme, but also brought an end to the Video Positive festivals. In response to this change, a new set of aims were drawn up, based around seven core themes: exhibition; production; participation, education and collaboration; ethos; accountability; the region; and management.[605] These themes echoed many of the Labour government's core objectives, and FACT's new position within a more traditional framework of art institutions ensured that it was well placed to attract funding from a wide range of sources.

The changes that were undertaken by FACT in the years 1997–2003 amounted to a process of institutionalisation, of which the FACT Centre was the physical manifestation. Through the rebranding process, and in the development of aims and objectives that closely responded to the new government agenda, FACT presented a more professional and corporate identity which complemented the revitalised image projected by New Labour, but it also placed the organisation within the long history of art and its institutions. Historically, Moviola had been imbued with a desire to produce work that was of relevance to the local community, and as an art agency it occupied a powerful position outside the traditional institutions of "family and marriage, the school, the university [and] the state."[606] The rebranding exercise of 1997, which was overtly aligned with government agendas, complicated the relationship between the organisation and its audiences, however, and whilst the decision to rebrand may not have been made with a stated intention to transform its operations from an agency model into an institution, this was the effect of the process, and the transformation was reinforced and represented by the construction of the FACT Centre.

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[605] *FACT's Mission (c.2003)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1, Folder – Business Plans 1989-2000)

[606] Zijderveld (2000), *The Institutional Imperative: The Interface of Institutions and Networks*, p.15

3.2 Regeneration: The FACT Centre

> *Culture's place in regeneration…rests on the claim to be fundamental to the delivery and maintenance of successful communities.*[607]

3.2.1 Cultural Quarters and Museums

According to Evans and Foord, culture plays a crucial role in everyday lives, and is also an important part of the economy of cities.[608] Evans' later vision of "cultural industry quarters"[609] can be seen as the physical manifestation of this idea. According to Derek Wynne, a cultural quarter is a "geographical area which contains the highest concentration…of theatres, cinemas, studios, galleries, concert halls, bookshops, restaurants, cafés and bars."[610] Agreeing where this concentration is highest, however, is less easily determined and the identification of Liverpool's cultural quarter is more in line with Tallon's view that the term is "nebulous and slippery."[611] According to the signage across the city, Liverpool's cultural quarter is located at the St George's Plateau, the site of the St George's Hall, original municipal museum, library and Walker Art Gallery at the western edge of the city's World Heritage Site.

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[607] Bristow, P. (2010), "Using Heritage in Regeneration: The Role of Museums," *Municipal Engineer,* vol.163, no.3, pp.139-144 (p.141)

[608] Evans and Foord (2003), "Shaping the Cultural Landscape: Local Regeneration Effects," p.167

[609] Evans, G. (2004), "Cultural Industry Quarters: From Pre-Industrial to Post-Industrial Production" in *City of Quarters: Urban Villages in the Contemporary City*, eds. D. Bell and M. Jayne, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.71-92 (p.72)

[610] Wynne, D. (1992), "Cultural Quarters" in *The Culture Industry: The Arts in Urban Regeneration*, ed. D. Wynne, Aldershot: Avebury, pp.13-23 (p.19)

[611] Tallon (2010), *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, p.227

Fig. 3.2.1 St George's Plateau, with the Walker Art Gallery to the right of St George's Hall, 2012

However, the St George's Plateau is not the location of a considerable number of the city's art galleries and museums, nor does it contain the other components of cultural quarters outlined by Wynne, with both the Albert Dock and the Bold Street areas of the city being closer to his definition. Despite the regeneration of the Albert Dock in the late 1980s, and recent developments there, such as the new Museum of Liverpool,[612] the Albert Dock area has never asserted its position as Liverpool's cultural quarter, and it has only been with the transformation of Liverpool's shopping area, which saw the opening of Liverpool One in 2008, that the Albert Dock development has been connected to the city centre. Liverpool One has shifted the focus of the city centre towards the River Mersey and away from more historic shopping areas such as Church Street and Bold Street, with the latter having been somewhat isolated from the heart of the city centre. In an attempt to reassert its position, Bold Street, and the surrounding Ropewalks district, has tried to assert an identity as "Liverpool's independent and bohemian...urban village"[613] which offers an alternative to the generic British high street offer that can be found in Liverpool One.

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[612] The Museum of Liverpool, one of the NML group, opened on 19 July 2011
[613] *FACT on Bold Street: Ropewalks Square, draft discussion paper (March 2010)*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive)

The Ropewalks is a 37.3 hectare area of Liverpool which was named because of its involvement in the city's shipping industry, and the proximity of the area to the docks led to it being "at the forefront of the first speculators boom in Liverpool."[614] This saw merchants and traders constructing factories and warehouses in the Ropewalks, and Bold Street, at the heart of the area, was initially a residential street for these merchants before becoming Liverpool's finest shopping street, sometimes compared to London's Bond Street.[615] As the city's docks declined, however, so too did the Ropewalks and its resident industries, and by the late 1990s the area had:

> High levels of unemployment (in excess of 30 per cent in the overlapping Duke Street/Cornwallis Pathways area); low skills and educational attainment levels; very low residential levels within the Quarter itself (between 100–200 people); poor communication and transport links; and high crime rates.[616]

However, it also contains a number of cafés and bars that have historic links to the city's music scene, and several smaller art organisations, including the Black-E, Bluecoat and the former site of the Open Eye Gallery.[617]

The numerous derelict warehouses that remained in the area were identified as suitable for investment for redevelopment and, since the late 1950s, the area has been the subject of many strategies for regeneration, including in the 1958 City Development Plan, the 1966 City Centre Plan and the 1972 City Centre Plan Review where it was designated as "a predominantly industrial zone."[618]

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[614] Liverpool World Heritage (2012), *Duke Street Area/Ropewalks* (Online)

[615] Liverpool Echo (2012), "Merseyside Tales: Bold Street in Liverpool, The Wealthiest Street in the City," *Liverpool Echo Online*, 24 March 2012 (Online); Ropewalks Liverpool (2010b), *The History of Ropewalks* (Online)

[616] Gilmore (2004), "Popular Music, Urban Regeneration and Cultural Quarters: The Case of the Rope Walks, Liverpool," p.112

[617] The Open Eye Gallery is now located at Mann Island on the Liverpool Waterfront (Open Eye Gallery (2012), *About Us* (Online))

[618] Gilmore (2004), "Popular Music, Urban Regeneration and Cultural Quarters: The Case of the Rope Walks, Liverpool," p.112

Fig. 3.2.2 The Ropewalks, Liverpool, adjacent to the Private Sector Development Association
site of Liverpool One

This view changed in 1987 when the cultural heritage of the area was acknowledged, and in 1989 Liverpool City Council commissioned a report which:

> Labelled the area a 'cultural district.' It recommended design-led
> regeneration, based within the development of design production
> in the city from crafts and cottage industry towards larger-scale
> production within manufacturing.[619]

Despite this, city officials have continued to identify the St George's Plateau as Liverpool's cultural quarter, and it has been through the independent collaboration of business, leisure and cultural partners that the Ropewalks Partnership[620] has developed. This, alongside initiatives such as the Bold Street Project[621] and the annual Bold Street Festival, has united residents and businesses with the common aim of creating "an exciting and thriving mixed-use urban quarter"[622] more representative of Liverpool's contemporary cultural offer than the institutions at the St George's Plateau.

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[619] ibid., p.112

[620] Ropewalks Liverpool (2010a), *Ropewalks: The Heart of Liverpool* (Online)

[621] The Bold Street Project (2011), *The Bold Street Project Blog* (Online)

[622] Couch (2003), *City of Change and Challenge: Urban Planning and Regeneration in Liverpool*, p.174

Fig. 3.2.3 Poster for the Bold St Festival, 2011

Both the Bluecoat, which housed Moviola's offices from 1989–2003, and FACT, since its premises opened on Wood Street in 2003, have been influential partners in the development of the Ropewalks identity, with the FACT Centre, the first ground-up cultural project since the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall was reconstructed in the 1930s,[623] being the largest regeneration initiative in the Ropewalks.

Fig. 3.2.4 The new Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, 1939

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[623] The new Liverpool Philharmonic Hall was built following the destruction of the original building by fire in 1933 (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (2012), *Our History: Liverpool Philharmonic Hall* (Online))

The FACT Centre development supports Bristow's statement that museums are increasingly being used as "the centrepiece of many regeneration schemes,"[624] but in his critique of regeneration strategies that place culture at their heart, he suggests that there is a fine balance to be found when ensuring that the creation of a flagship institution, whether as a ground-up development or refurbishment of an existing building, is integrated into the community it resides within. He attributes the difficulty of this task to the fact that culture and regeneration are so fundamentally different.

> Unlike many of the spatial elements of policy related to regeneration, culture relies entirely on interactions between individuals and social groups. Promotion of particular types of interactions through planning cultural infrastructure is the means by which culture contributes to regeneration, but there has to be an overriding rationale for the inclusion of culture, along with an awareness of what it will contribute in the particular context of the place undergoing regeneration.[625]

In response to this, he presents a list of issues that must be considered in relation to culture and regeneration, stating that the opening of a museum is only one of many ways that culture can be used to regenerate an area.[626] In relation to a new building, the transport infrastructure for the whole city, and particularly to the regenerated area, can be improved, and he states that the buildings themselves are now expected to provide a range of services for diverse audiences and stakeholders.

This integration of cultural institutions into urban regeneration strategies reflects the transformation of the roles that museums and galleries are now expected to undertake and the services that they can provide. Graham Black presents a list of these services and, although lengthy, it is far from comprehensive, but emphasises how complex the role of museums and galleries is in contemporary society.   He states that a museum is now expected to be:

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[624] Bristow (2010), "Using Heritage in Regeneration: The Role of Museums," p.139
[625] ibid., p.141
[626] ibid., p.143

- An object treasure-house significant to all local communities
- An agent for physical, economic, cultural and social regeneration
- Accessible to all – intellectually, physically, social, culturally, economically
- Relevant to the whole society, with the community involved in product development and delivery, and with a core purpose of improving people's lives
- A celebrant of cultural diversity
- A promoter of social cohesion and a bridger of social capital
- A promoter of social inclusion
- Proactive in supporting neighbourhood and community renewal
- Proactive in developing, working with and managing pan-agency projects
- A resource for structured educational use
- Integral to the learning community
- A community meeting place
- A tourist attraction
- An income generator
- An exemplar of quality service provision and value for money.[627]

The complexity of these demands on cultural institutions is self-evident, but when combined with the requirements of regeneration alluded to by Bristow, the weight of expectation on museums and galleries is significant. Furthermore, many of these services have to be delivered on the short-term, relatively low-level public funding initiatives that support Britain's culture, which leaves museums and galleries constantly partaking in "a delicate balancing act" of being both responsive and responsible, whilst also challenging audiences with new ideas and interpretations of history and culture.[628]

3.2.2 The MICE Project and Its Precedents

One of the regeneration plans for the Ropewalks that was developed in the 1990s, focused on the former site of the Crown Foods factory on Wood Street. In 1995, in partnership with the Moving Image Development Agency (MIDA), Moviola conducted a feasibility study for this site to be developed into a media centre, with the intention that it would fill a void in the arts and cultural offer in Britain.

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[627] Black (2005), *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, p.4

[628] Anderson, G. (2004), "Introduction: Reinventing the Museum" in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. G. Anderson, Oxford: AltaMira Press, pp.1-7 (p.5)

> After 30 years of video art and 20 more of computer-based media art practice the inevitable occurred: people began making buildings to house 'collections' and forming institutions to present and produce specialist work to an increasingly art-savvy public.[629]

The report produced by Moviola and MIDA stated that Moving Image Centre for Exhibition (MICE) could "provide a platform for [the] integration of a variety of services and activities offered by producers, distributors, publishers and trainers in the moving image and new media industries,"[630] and would build on a number of precedents across Europe and the UK. The 1970s and 1980s had seen an increase in the number of institutions that worked with media technology, and Moviola and MIDA were keen to develop a model for media centres that was more in line with art institutions as part of "the next wave of media art practice."[631]

Fig. 3.2.5 Crown Foods Factory site, Wood Street, Liverpool

In Britain there had been a flurry of activity in the early 1980s which saw the establishment of the media centre model here, with organisations such as Watershed opening on Bristol's harbour in 1982,[632] and Cornerhouse opening in Manchester in 1985.[633]

[629] Berg (2003b), "95: Building Blocks," p.6
[630] *mice: The Moving Image Centre for Exhibition, A Major New Cultural Initiative and Visitor Centre for Liverpool (prepared by Moviola and MIDA for the British Film Institute and North West Arts Board (1995)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Business Plans and Reports), p.8
[631] Berg (2003b), "95: Building Blocks," p.6
[632] Watershed (2012), *About Us* (Online)
[633] Cornerhouse (2012), *Our History* (Online)

Fig. 3.2.6 Watershed: Cultural Cinema and Digital Creativity Centre, Bristol Harbour

Fig. 3.2.7 Cornerhouse, Oxford St, Manchester

However, it was in Europe that two media centres opened which were of greater interest to the MICE planning team. These institutions, the Ars Electronica Centre in Linz, Austria, and the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, had origins in the late 1970s and early 1980s, although neither opened until the mid-1990s, but discussions documented in the FACT archive show that Moviola was closely following these and other developments on the continent.[634] As discussed in Section 2.1.1, Ars Electronica (Ars) provides an interesting parallel with Moviola, having launched as a media art festival in 1979 with similar goals to Video Positive, and by opening a centre in 1996 that was intended to be "the architectural expression" of the festival.[635] Ars state that the Ars Electronica Centre was to be "a place of inquiry and discovery, experimentation and

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[634] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*. Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1, pp.18-19
[635] Ars Electronica (2012b), *Ars Electronica Centre* (Online)

exploration,"[636] and a location that combines exhibition and social spaces. The following year, 1997, ZKM opened a centre with a comparable structure to the Ars Electronica Centre, although it was funded by the German government. The idea of ZKM was first pitched in 1980,[637] and with a delivery time of about seventeen years, there are parallels with the MICE/FACT Centre project.

(L) Fig. 3.2.8 Ars Electronica Centre, Linz, Austria

(R) Fig. 3.2.9 Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany

Eddie Berg first started to investigate the idea of housing Moviola in its own premises in 1991,[638] and during a Board meeting that year, he questioned whether the organisation should be "pioneering the idea of opening up a space/gallery/centre completely devoted to exhibition, promotion, education and training in video, electronic and new media."[639] His idea was for a new type of media centre, and the vision is worth quoting at length. He wanted a centre that was:

> Not a museum like Bradford; not a history of cinema and related electronic artforms like London, but something that is ACTIVE in developing a new awareness, opportunities and possibilities for participation to a whole range of people regionally. It would be the only space of its kind in the UK. We could have (international) artist in residence programmes, exhibitions of video and electronic media art from across the world, workshops, formal training, educational initiatives, new media archives, databases; the works basically.[640]

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[636] ibid.

[637] Ars Electronica (2012a), *About* (Online); Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (2012b)*, ZKM_Beginnings* (Online)

[638] *Notes of the FACT/MICE Meeting, 27 June 1998*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE, Folder – MICE Meeting Minutes 1996-1997)

[639] *Board Meeting Minutes, 11 July 1991*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Until End 1991)

[640] ibid.

Discussions for the vision outlined here did not begin again until September 1994,[641] and by 1997 the conditions in Britain had changed again due to the election of the Labour government. Furthermore, with the recent opening of the Ars Electronica Centre and ZKM, FACT positioned its plans for a building as distinct from these developments, stating that whilst these models had clearly been influential, there were fundamental differences in its purpose, most notably because FACT had a "remit to deliver Film & Video and to develop a notion of media arts" on a national level.[642] Furthermore, the mid to late 1990s saw another burst of activity in Britain, with a report by Boyden Southwood Associates for the Arts Council of England (ACE) identifying sixteen organisations which worked with the digital arts in 1996.[643] By the end of the decade, some of these organisations had opened media centres, including the Lux Centre, a union of London Electronic Arts and London Filmmakers Co-operative,[644] and Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA), opening in 1997 and 1999 respectively.[645] This signalled the emergence of a new model for media centres which FACT defined as discernible because it "incorporated cinema with galleries and, in some cases, cultural production."[646] FACT stated that it was aware of the shortcomings of this existing model for media centres in Britain, however, and the organisation asserted its desire to "present a cohesive whole," rather than the combination of a cinema and gallery which share the same building.[647]

Securing funding for a national media centre in Liverpool was not straightforward, however, and early proposals for a multi-occupant, multi-functional media facility in the city had to be argued for strongly. Liverpool was suggested as the most suitable location because of the history of the Video Positive festivals and the absence of an arthouse cinema, a

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[641] *AGM Board Papers, 22 September 1994*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1994-1996)

[642] *FACT Centre Programme (Helen Sloan, Curator)*, (Available: FACT Centre, Box – Board Archive 2, Folder – Board 2.1, Board Reports)

[643] The organisations outlined by the ACE were: ACAVA; Artimedia; Art of Change; Artworks (Hull); Birmingham Centre for Media Arts; Cambridge Darkroom; The Junction; Cultural Partnerships; The Drum; Hull Time-Based Arts; Jubilee Arts; Lighthouse; London Electronic Arts; Moviola; Watershed; and WFA (Boyden Southwood Associates (1996), *Research into the Application of New Technologies and the Arts*, Bristol: Boyden Southwood)

[644] Lux Online (2005c), *Histories 1997* (Online)

[645] Dundee Contemporary Arts (2012), *Organisation Information* (Online)

[646] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1), p.16

[647] ibid., p.17

provision which is typically found in cities of a comparable size. The feasibility study outlined a number of reasons for the development, including: a growing moving image industry; a leading commissioning and promotion agency for digital art in the form of FACT, which had outgrown its current premises; the future eligibility of Merseyside to obtain European Union (EU) funding through their Objective 1 programme;[648] the need for regeneration in the city centre through the creation of a "creative quarter" in the Ropewalks area; and the recent availability of capital funds through the National Lottery.[649]

With this combination of factors, and having asserted the desire to "build upon local strengths" through collaboration with "all the key Multimedia agencies in Liverpool,"[650] MICE was presented as an opportunity to:

> Develop a visitor attraction and facility resource that encourages participation, cultural stimulation, education, entertainment and enterprise in film, video, television, multimedia and new media sectors.[651]

Financial support was eventually secured from the National Lottery, British Film Institute (BFI) and North West Arts Board, and although it is unclear from the archive material who the project partners and proposed occupants would be aside from FACT, the organisation asserted its role in "managing the development"[652] of the project. MICE was intended to provide the following:

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[648] The Objective 1 programme ran from 2000 to 2006, and saw investment in Merseyside of over £800 million. (Network for Europe (2012), *Objective 1* (Online)). Objective 1 was designed to "promote the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind" (Europa (2005), *Objective 1* (Online))

[649] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1), p.1. See also Couch 2003

[650] *mice: The Moving Image Centre for Exhibition, A Major New Cultural Initiative and Visitor Centre for Liverpool (prepared by Moviola and MIDA for the British Film Institute and North West Arts Board (1995)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Business Plans and Reports), p.3

[651] *MICE Mission and Objectives (August 1996)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE, Folder – MICE Meeting Minutes 1996-1997)

[652] *Foundation for Art and Creative Technology: Information Release, Board Papers: 23 July 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1996-1997)

- Four screens in order to sustain an efficient cinema operation
- Café and bar areas in order to encourage social activity and differentiate from multiplexes
- An impressive piece of contemporary design to encourage pride and ownership
- Very flexible exhibition spaces in order to accommodate a diversity of media and changing patterns of production, exhibition and distribution
- A building in which as many areas and surfaces as possible can be used for aesthetically stimulating display and information
- A building which is accessible for all public and artists through physical design, ambience and orientation
- Both public and private areas to meet the needs of FACT and its markets
- An adequate goods delivery and service area
- Adequate office and rest space
- Meeting and training facilities
- Electronic laboratory facilities for artists research and development
- Archive and library resources[653]

These services would be facilitated by placing a "strong emphasis on public spaces in order to create [an] attractive ambience," as well as integrating the public and private realm and developing a strong brand identity for the organisation.[654] However, at the Annual General Meeting of 16 December 1998, the FACT Board agreed to stop pursuing a collaborative building project, instead proposing a single-occupant building with three cinemas, two galleries, educational facilities and a café and bar.[655] Nevertheless, the ambition remained to provide a new model for media centres which would improve upon the shortcomings of previous attempts across Britain and Europe, and although FACT initially stated that the building would be completed in 1999,[656] it was not until 2003 that the doors finally opened.

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[653] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1), pp.89-90
[654] ibid.
[655] *Director's Review, AGM Board Papers 16 December 1998*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)
[656] *Foundation for Art and Creative Technology: Information Release, Board Papers: 23 July 1996*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1996-1997)

3.2.3 The FACT Centre

The FACT Centre opened on 22 February 2003, having cost £11 million, and containing "artists' film, video and new media projects in the galleries and media lounge as well as...three state-of-the-art cinemas."[657]

Fig. 3.2.10 The FACT Centre, Wood Street, Liverpool

Funding was sourced from a number of different places, with £8 million from the ACE, of which almost £4 million was from the National Lottery, and the remaining £3 million being contributed by BFI, City Screen, English Partnerships, Granada Foundation, Liverpool City Council and European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) through the Liverpool Ropewalks Partnership.[658] The building that opened was somewhat different from the initial plans for MICE, having moved away from the multi-occupant media centre model it

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[657] Berg (2003e), "Foreword," p.5

[658] Arts Council England (2003), *Annual Review 2003*, London: Arts Council England, p.33; Doherty, C. (2003d), *X Factor,* Liverpool: FACT, p.46; *Board Meeting Minutes, 21 May 2001*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002); *Press Announcement: The FACT Centre – A New Cultural Building for the 21st Century in the Heart of Liverpool, Board Papers 22 November 1999*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1998-2002)

had originally developed, but underpinning the project was a desire to create a building that was suited to the organisation's diverse needs, as well as creating a facility that offered "significant cultural, social and economic benefits to the city of Liverpool and the wider region."[659] Claims that the FACT Centre would create jobs, investment and training, as well as supporting local businesses, were integral to securing funding from schemes such as the ERDF,[660] but FACT described the FACT Centre, in private business plans, as "a physical statement of the ethos that drives the activities within it."[661]

The idea of using the building to act as the physical representation of the organisation mirrored the statement made by Ars that its premises are the "architectural expression" of its festival programme,[662] and as discussed in Section 3.2.2, FACT further reflected Ars by developing a series of objectives that drove the project, including to: awaken curiosity; reveal connections; invite debate; inform practice; promote participation; provoke enquiry; and entertain.[663] FACT and Ars were similar because they had both developed into institutions from a festival programme, and whilst Ars continues to host its festival annually, FACT's Video Positive festivals were not sustained once the FACT Centre project was underway. Having grown out of a festival with a strong brand, Ars have developed other projects aside from the Ars Electronica Centre, including Prix Ars Electronica and Ars Electronica Futurelab,[664] which operate under the same brand whilst maintaining an independent programme in terms of delivery and aims. In contrast, FACT's brand was developed after the establishment of its independent sub-brands, Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme and MITES and, as a consequence, the organisation has struggled to develop a unified identity that encapsulates its many activities. Consequently, there were lengthy discussions on what name to give the new building, with the FACT Board

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[659] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.34
[660] ibid.
[661] *FACT Centre: Transition (The Orange Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.2
[662] Ars Electronica (2012b), *Ars Electronica Centre* (Online)
[663] *The FACT Centre: Making an Institution*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1, Folder – Early FACT Planning Docs)
[664] Ars Electronica (2012e), *Prix Ars Electronica* (Online); Ars Electronica (2012c), *Ars Electronica Futurelab*. (Online)

undertaking a brainstorming session that came up with a number of options.[665] However, it was agreed that the building should be known, as with Ars, as the FACT Centre, with the only difference being that the word *Foundation* would be substituted by *Film* in the case of the building.[666] This alteration to the name was never fully adopted, however, and the organisation and building are today both known simply as 'FACT.'

The difficulties surrounding the naming of the FACT Centre demonstrates a wider issue regarding the integration of the film programme into FACT's other activities, and unlike other media centres, such as DCA, the organisation does not have control over the cinemas within the building. The planning and delivery of the FACT Centre project was far more complex, and had a much larger budget, than the other work that FACT had produced or commissioned, and with the organisation in debt following "heavy losses sustained by Video Positive 2000,"[667] the ACE placed some strict conditions on its funding allowance. Through David Curtis, the ACE had already expressed concerns about the concept of FACT developing its own premises because of the financial pressures that front-of-house and maintenance responsibilities would bring, and which would detract from the organisation's other functions,[668] although FACT remained confident that it continued to be:

> Seen by the Arts Council of England…to fulfil an important national strategic role, as one of a small number of national agencies in the UK dedicated to supporting artist's film and video and new media work and providing services and product to exhibitions.[669]

Although this statement is uncorroborated, the level of financial support, and FACT's ongoing position as one of the ACE's Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO), suggests it was considered to be of local and national importance. However, the ACE insisted that the cinema screens in the FACT Centre must be controlled by a private partner, leading to a

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[665] Some of the names suggested included: Atom; Domain; Mobius; Fiction; The Media Institute; and Liverpool Creative (*Board Meeting Minutes, 22 November 1999*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)

[666] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010; Liverpool Culture Company (2005), *Strategic Business Plan 2005-2009*, Liverpool: Liverpool Culture Company

[667] *AGM Board Papers, 11 December 2000*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)

[668] Curtis, interviewed by the author, 24 March 2010

[669] *FACT Centre: History and Context (The Green Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.15

£600,000 capital investment from, and twenty-five year contract with, City Screen Limited, the trading name of Picturehouse Cinemas. City Screen was founded in 1989 and is currently "the leading independent cinema operator in the UK," with a network of fifty-seven cinemas across the country, twenty of which are owned by City Screen, with the remaining thirty-seven being programmed by the organisation on behalf of its partners.[670] City Screen state that the company is committed to providing an arthouse cinema programme which maintains "the individuality of each cinema" by responding to its local audience,[671] and the organisation was contracted to "provide operational, managerial and marketing services"[672] at the FACT Centre.

Although the FACT Centre development, which is close to the city centre and can be described as "architecturally interesting," appears to meet with City Screen's philosophy,[673] successive directors, Eddie Berg, Gillian Henderson and Mike Stubbs, have each reported on the difficulty of the relationship between the art organisation and the cinema.[674] Clive Gillman, the Lead Artist on the building project, suggests that these difficulties stemmed from disagreements over the final designs for the façade of the FACT Centre, which omitted conventional cinema features such as posters and a readograph,[675] and he also suggests that FACT were disappointed that the arthouse programme promised by City Screen was never fully established. On this issue Gillman stated that "it was kind of depressing when we opened FACT, and…a few weeks after opening we were showing [the film] *Wimbledon* as the main title."[676] This film was released in September 2004, so it was screened eighteen months after the FACT Centre opened and not as quickly as Gillman recalls, but as a Universal Pictures film starring Hollywood actors Kirsten Dunst and Paul Bettany which grossed $16.8 million at the US Box Office, its inclusion in Picturehouse at FACT's listings

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[670] Picturehouse (2009), *City Screen Limited* (Online)
[671] ibid.
[672] *FACT Centre: Programme and Operations Appendices R1-7 (The Red Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), Section 1.1
[673] Picturehouse (2009), *City Screen Limited* (Online)
[674] Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010; Henderson, G. (Create Kings Cross, former Director, FACT), interviewed by the author, 25 January 2010; Stubbs, interviewed by the author, 7 January 2010
[675] ibid.
[676] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010

suggests that City Screen had begun to programme more mainstream films than would normally be expected in an arthouse cinema.[677]
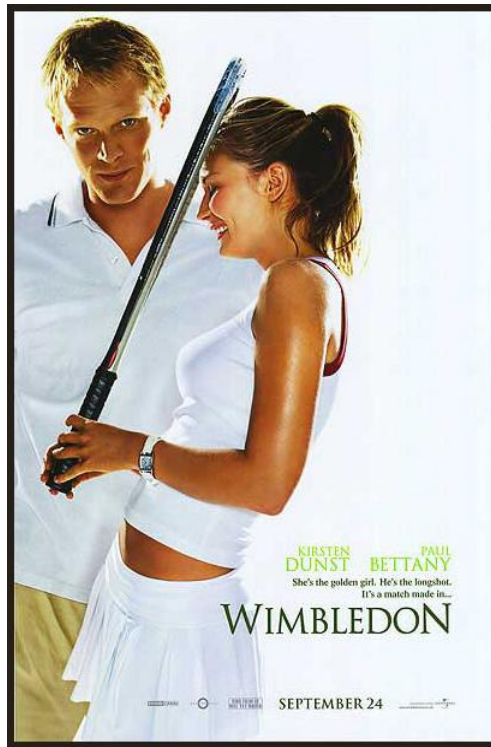

Fig. 3.2.11 Film poster for *Wimbledon* (2004)

3.2.4 Building or Artwork?

However, FACT's ambitions for the FACT Centre extended beyond providing an arthouse cinema, as demonstrated by the appointment of an artist to work alongside the architects. The organisation wanted to create a "contemporary landmark building" which would be "a key development in the regeneration of the recently established Rope Walks *[sic]* area"[678] and they viewed the project as an artwork in itself. The architecture practice appointed for the design was Austin-Smith:Lord (ASL), a national practice with offices in London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Manchester and Liverpool. ASL was founded in Manchester in 1949, and relocated to Warrington in the late 1960s before returning to Manchester in 2003.[679] At the time that the FACT Centre project commenced, ASL was operating out of Warrington and, although

[677] Rotten Tomatoes (2012), *Wimbledon (2004)* (Online)
[678] *Press Announcement: The FACT Centre – A New Cultural Building for the 21st Century in the Heart of Liverpool, Board Papers 22 November 1999*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Moviola Board Papers 1998-2002)
[679] Austin-Smith:Lord (2012c), *Story* (Online)

they list a diverse range of commercial, civic, regeneration and residential schemes within their past projects, they had limited experience of designing cultural buildings.[680] Prior to the FACT Centre, ASL had only designed the new Science and Industry Museum in Manchester, but have subsequently gone on to work on a number of museums and galleries across the North West of England and Yorkshire, including the Leeds City Museum, the National Media Museum in Bradford and the People's History Museum in Manchester. Furthermore, since the completion of the FACT Centre, ASL opened an office in Liverpool in 2006,[681] and have completed a number of projects in the city, including the base2stay hotel on Seel Street and the redevelopment of the Bluecoat in 2008.[682]

The primary aim of the Lead Artist in working with the architects was to create a building that would "act as an information system, with different shapes, lighting and colours indicating what might be happening inside."[683] This desire to create a reflexive building transformed the project from one solely about function to being also about artistic expression. Seven artworks were commissioned and integrated into the building design, with Clive Gillman producing *The Orientation Wall*, *Sensibilia*, *External Lighting*, and *Metroscopes*, alongside Graham Parker's *Local Heroes*, greyworld's *Tune*, and The Singh Twin's *7 Portraits*.[684] Each of these artworks was commissioned to contribute to the different ways of experiencing the FACT Centre, with *Sensibilia* intended for visitors with sensory impairment, *Tune* being played continually, and almost subliminally, throughout the building's public spaces, and the *7 Portraits* reflecting the history of the organisation through visual representations of some of the people involved in it.[685] Furthermore, artworks such as *Metroscopes* and the *External Lighting* spilled out of the building and into the public spaces around it, with the latter being embedded into the fabric of the building,

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[680] Austin-Smith:Lord (2012a), *Culture and Leisure* (Online)

[681] Austin-Smith:Lord (2012c), *Story* (Online)

[682] Austin-Smith:Lord (2012b), *Galleries and Museums* (Online)

[683] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1), p.49

[684] FACT (2003a), *Commission – Arts Commissions and Interventions*, Liverpool: FACT, p.6. For more information on Clive Gillman's artworks for the FACT Centre, see Gillman 2012b

[685] The seven portraits were of: Billy Flynn, a construction worker on the FACT Centre; Geoffrey Horley, the financial advisor for the FACT Centre project; Olga Bayley, a *tenantspin* participant; Roy Stringer, former co-chair of the FACT Board; Gina Grey, participant in a video project with artist Kristin Lucas; Isaac Julien, one of the first artists to have work exhibited in the FACT Centre; and Jamie Scott, one of the architects of the FACT Centre (FACT (2003a), *Commission – Arts Commissions and Interventions*, pp.7-12)

through strips of lights in the sequence of the colour television test pattern[686] running up the building's façade to information panels that would project information about the FACT Centre, and be visible across the city.

(L) Fig. 3.2.12 Clive Gillman, *External Lighting* (2003), FACT Centre

**(R) Fig. 3.2.13** Clive Gillman, *External Lighting* (2003) at night, FACT Centre

However, an error during installation, and the subsequent liquidation of the installation company, led to the artwork being irreparably damaged and, consequently, it no longer functioned after only a few months of being exposed to the weather.[687]

Of the artworks commissioned for the FACT Centre, only *Local Heroes, Tune* and *Metroscopes* remain on display, with the *External Lighting* in place but not operational, and without the artworks that were designed into the building as a means of enticing people in through "seductive architecture, transparency and accessibility,"[688] the FACT Centre can be seen as both austere and compromised in terms of its essential functions.

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[686] The colour television test pattern is: white, yellow, cyan, green, magenta, red, blue.

[687] Gillman, interviewed by the author, 27 July 2010; Gillman, C. (2012a), *FACT Centre* (Online)

[688] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.5
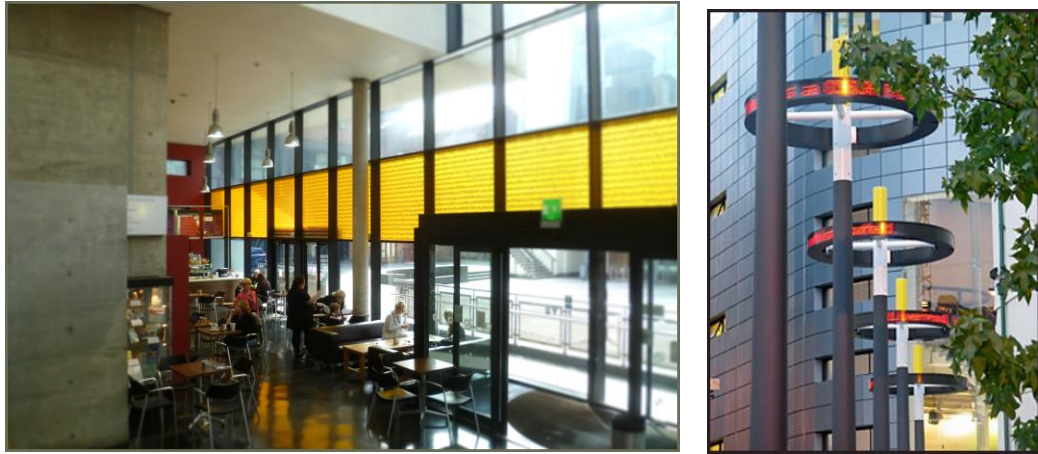
(L) Fig. 3.2.14 Graham Parker, *Local Heroes* (2003) and the 'Franklins at FACT' café, FACT Centre, 2012

(R) Fig. 3.2.15 Clive Gillman, *Metroscopes* (2003), Ropewalks Square, Liverpool

One issue for the FACT Centre has been its difficulty in expressing its triple role as a gallery, social space and cinema, although in August 2012, the façade of the FACT Centre was restyled to include the slogan "film, art, media" and explicitly states, through sizeable signage, that the building is a cinema and gallery. Whilst this identifies its functions, it does not rectify the problems posed by the spaces within the building, with the large atrium, which was intended to allow the flow of people to the cinema, as well as housing the café and bar, being a problematic space for curators to programme.[689] The absence of *art* on entering the building further emphasises the building's other functions, each of which is controlled by a different company; FACT, City Screen and the café franchise Franklins,[690] thus leading to the segregation of audiences into either art consumers, cinema-goers, or customers. Consequently, monitoring the organisation's art audiences is problematic, and claims such as 2,500 visitors on opening day,[691] and 25,000 visitors within the first six weeks of opening,[692] as well as subsequent statistics like the millionth visitor in 2006 and two millionth during 2008,[693] are difficult to verify, and it is even more difficult to ascertain for what purpose these audiences use the building.

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[689] Hand, C. (Director, Ceri Hand Gallery, former Director of Exhibitions, FACT), interviewed by the author, 11 February 2010
[690] FACT (2012b), *Food and Drink* (Online)
[691] Berg (2003e), "Foreword," p.5
[692] *Director's Report, 07 April 2003*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board Archive 2)
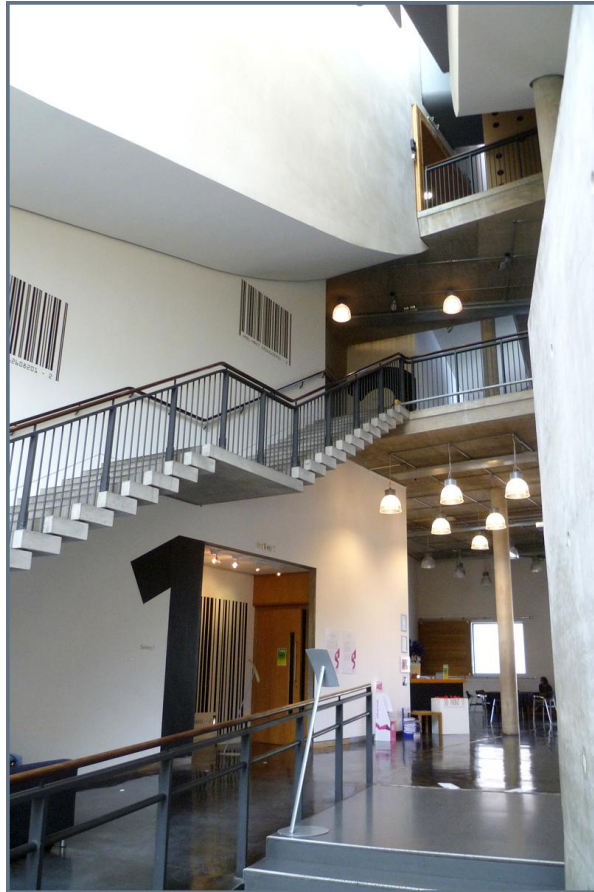[693] See FACT 2009

Fig. 3.2.16 The atrium of the FACT Centre, 2012

3.2.5 Evaluation: Successes and Failures

How then should we assess the FACT Centre in terms of successes or failures? As outlined above, the disparity between the organisations that control the functions within the FACT Centre has been problematic throughout the building's history, and FACT's relationship with City Screen has been a barrier to achieving one of its early aims: to "present a cohesive whole."[694]   Nevertheless, the opening of the FACT Centre provided the organisation with an opportunity to review the company structure, and it was in 2003 that FACT identified three parallel strands within the organisation. The Exhibition Programme, Collaboration Programme and Structural Programme ran alongside each other, and were presented as having equal value within the company. Whether this worked in practice is questionable, however, as the FACT Centre repositioned the organisation as an art institution, thus implicitly prioritising its artistic programme.

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[694] *The FACT Centre: A Centre for the Moving Image, Stage 1 Feasibility Study, Options Appraisal (30 October 1998)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – MICE Archive 1), p.17

Furthermore, and as highlighted in Section 2.2.5, the Collaboration Programme in particular has struggled to find a place within the new building, and although it has continued to operate in conjunction with the Exhibition Programme, it has also developed, with some exceptions, into a more traditional arts education service. Whilst FACT does not have a permanent collection, and can no longer be considered to be solely committed to video art and moving image, its focus on media art has enabled the organisation to appeal to different audiences through its use of computing and media technology. This has enabled the promotion of social inclusion, cohesion and access, and through the concurrent Collaboration Programme projects, FACT has continued to provide education and community art services both within the FACT Centre and beyond its walls. This has been achieved by continuing to adopt a "pan-agency"[695] approach to its work, an ethos that has been an integral part of FACT's history, and the opening of the FACT Centre has broadened this capability by facilitating joint exhibitions with both local and international partners.

FACT's success in continuing to produce projects that adhere to its early aims and objectives, would suggest that fears regarding the impact that a building would have on the organisation's integrity have not been realised, although this does not take into consideration the impact that the new institutionalised image, as projected by the building, has had on audiences. Issues of institutionalisation have been discussed previously, but with the opening of the building, the process became unavoidable, despite claims that FACT would "continue its agency role through the FACT Centre."[696] FACT claimed that it would be able to achieve this by expanding the Collaboration Programme and through dissemination of its activities on the Internet,[697] but there was no sophisticated plan for how this approach would be implemented. Instead, the nature of its artistic outputs was fundamentally altered by the fact that it had an exhibition space, and the need to continually host exhibitions has directed resources away from the Collaboration and Structural Programmes and into the Exhibition Programme. Furthermore, the nature of the galleries within the FACT Centre has further exacerbated the problem, and highlights some of the issues of access that have been discussed previously. The way audiences use the FACT Centre has proven to be problematic because the gallery spaces were developed

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[695] ibid., p.4

[696] *FACT Centre: Synopsis (The White Book)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – FACT Centre Business Plans (HIST.25); Folder – June 1999), p.11

[697] ibid.

when the black box format was still in evolution, and the flow of people through the building to the cinema somewhat side-lines the gallery spaces, giving the impression that the main function of the building is as a cinema.

The difficulty of accessibility to some of the building's main functions can perhaps be attributed to the lack of experience of those developing the model for the FACT Centre, and it must be noted that the delivery of a building project of this scale was an achievement in itself. Despite its demands regarding the operation of the cinemas, it would appear that FACT, through Clive Gillman, acted as its own client representative for the project, and the realisation of the FACT Centre, which was in the making for almost twelve years from early discussions in 1991, to its opening in 2003, was of great significance to both the organisation and the city. However, it pushed FACT to the brink of bankruptcy and came, ultimately, at the cost of Video Positive. From the outset, FACT was keen to pursue a ground-up project having acknowledged the wealth of heritage buildings already in Liverpool, and the construction of something new and purpose-built for an organisation with very specific exhibition requirements, was believed to be the most cost-effective option.[698] By November 2001, and only a few months ahead of the proposed opening of the FACT Centre, an Extraordinary Board Meeting was called to discuss its options, as only £40,000 of its original budget remained and the ERDF had frozen its grant because of slow progress on the building.[699] The financial difficulties pushed the opening of the FACT Centre back to February 2003, and were exacerbated by the collapse of the roof in the cinemas only six weeks after the building opened.[700]

The FACT Centre has, however, provided one significant benefit, which is its ability to act as insurance against the funding cuts that have taken place across arts and culture in recent years. After such considerable capital outlay, the ACE has continued to maintain FACT as one of its RFOs, despite a reduction in the overall number of organisations that are funded

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[698] *mice: The Moving Image Centre for Exhibition, A Major New Cultural Initiative and Visitor Centre for Liverpool (prepared by Moviola and MIDA for the British Film Institute and North West Arts Board (1995)*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Business Plans and Reports), p.27

[699] *Extraordinary Board Meeting, 21 November 2001*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Board File 1, Folder – Board Papers 1998-2002)

[700] See Davis 2003; Faulkner 2003

in this manner.   In 2003/4, the ACE had 1,200 RFOs and this reduced to 1,135 by 2005/6, despite an increase in its budgets for RFOs from £225.3 million to £300.8 million over the same period. In 2003, aside from the capital investment in the FACT Centre project, FACT received £616,000 from the ACE and by 2006 this had increased to £944,000. This rise in annual funding equates to an increase from being in receipt of 0.27% of the national RFO funding to 0.31%, and whilst the increase coincided with the planning stages for Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture, FACT's funding has remained at about 0.3% since 2008.[701]   However, this changed in April 2012 when the RFO system of funding was replaced with the National Portfolio Funding Programme, which has seen the number of organisations regularly funded by the ACE reduced to 696, with eighty-six being in the North West. Under this system, FACT received an annual allowance in 2011/12 of just over £1 million, which maintained a consistent level of income from the ACE, but demonstrates that FACT had not benefited from the increase in the overall National Portfolio budget to £329.2 million, and the concurrent reduction in the number of annual clients.[702]

	Number of RFOs/National Portfolio	ACE's Annual Budget	Average Available Allowance	FACT's Annual Allowance	Percentage of Total Budget
2003/04	1200	£225.3 million	£187,750	£616,000	0.27%
2005/06	1135	£300.8 million	£265,022	£944,000	0.31%
2011/12	696	£329.2 million	£472,988	£1,000,112	0.30%

Fig. 3.2.17 Table showing the details of ACE's regular funding since the FACT Centre opened

However, FACT receives the largest amount for a visual arts organisation in Liverpool,[703] excluding Tate Liverpool and National Museums Liverpool (NML) which are funded

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[701] Data taken from Arts Council England (2010), *Annual Review 2010*, London: Arts Council England, p.6; Arts Council England (2007), *Regularly Funded Organisations: Key Data from the 2005/6 Annual Submission*, London: Arts Council England, p.2; Arts Council England (2003), *Annual Review 2003*, p.33

[702] Arts Council England (2012c), *National Portfolio Funding Programme* (Online)

[703] For the year 2012/13, FACT receives £1,000,112; Liverpool Biennial receives £695,344; The Bluecoat receives £484,082; and the Open Eye Gallery receives £191, 193. For information on the

differently. Furthermore, although the funding structure outlined by the ACE for 2012–2015 reduces its allowance in real terms by 11%, the ongoing funding supports the claim that the building, which could be seen as a financial burden on the organisation, has ensured that the ACE have protected FACT in light of its capital investment in the FACT Centre.[704]

funding of the National Portfolio Organisations in the North West, see Arts Council England (2012d), *Region: North West* (Online)

[704] Although this claim is plausible, it cannot be proven. However, there is evidence to suggest that capital investment from the ACE leads to inflated annual funding whilst the organisation settles into its new premises. This is supported by evidence that Cornerhouse, Manchester, a media centre that is comparable with FACT and is currently undergoing a redevelopment project, will enjoy a 7.5% increase in its annual funding in 2013/14 and 10% increase 2014/15, by contrast to FACT's annual increase of 2.3% and 2.6% (Arts Council England (2012a), *Cornerhouse* (Online); Arts Council England (2012b), *FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology)* (Online))

3.3 City: FACT and the Regeneration of Liverpool

Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008, greedy businessmen can't wait...But who will benefit from all the culture, the man in the street or the business vulture? The city centre is the jewel in the crown, but the rest of the city is falling down. Will the new wealth filter through to the likes of me and you?[705]

3.3.1 Introduction

Having analysed the changes that took place within FACT after 1997, this chapter situates the new organisational model within the broader context of its host city. As discussed in Section 1.2.2, Liverpool was the site of one of the first Urban Development Corporations (UDC) to be established under Thatcher's Conservative government, and this regeneration strategy signalled an extensive programme of urban redevelopment across the city. The largest of these projects, the European Capital of Culture (ECoC), will be evaluated in this chapter, and FACT's contribution to the event will be analysed in order to assess the organisation's wider role within the cultural and social profile of Liverpool. This will be achieved by first considering the regeneration of Liverpool that took place at the beginning of the twenty-first century, before assessing the ECoC model, and the manner in which Liverpool's bid was conducted. This will be followed by a study of FACT's role in the year-long celebrations, before concluding with an interrogation of the question of legacy, and the long-term implications of the ECoC year.

3.3.2 Liverpool before European Capital of Culture

In the aftermath of the social unrest of 1981, the regeneration of Liverpool's city centre has been a central issue in both local and national policy, and in light of the difficulties of reinvigorating the city's economy, projects such as the Albert Dock redevelopment and the International Garden Festival showed that culture was frequently placed at the heart of regeneration strategies. This approach was furthered after the signing of the Maastrict Treaty in 1992 which led to the EU having greater influence on culture by providing extra

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[705] Jane Canning of Norris Green cited in High Altitude Films (2005), *The Boot Estate* (Online)

funding for culture and heritage projects. This was closely followed in 1994 by the National Lottery, which provided capital funding for arts, heritage, sport, charities and millennium projects.[706]   Furthermore, as outlined in Section 3.1.2, the election of the Labour government in 1997, and the creation of the DCMS saw culture being integrated into other policy areas. In isolation from cultural regeneration projects, however, new consumer habits and work-time arrangements developed from a period of economic boom and New Labour's policies[707] and this led to an increase in private investment in Britain's cities, with Liverpool being the recipient of a major commercial redevelopment project in the city centre.

This investment was led by property development group Grosvenor, and it saw the construction of Liverpool One, a shopping centre that has connected the Church Street shopping area to the Albert Dock development on Liverpool's waterfront. Liverpool One signalled the arrival of many chain high street shops, restaurants and bars,[708] as well as top-end boutiques and designer retailers, and whilst Liverpool city has been transformed, the outcome is the creation of a generic British "identikit city"[709] which arguably fails to reflect, or serve, the majority of people who live there.

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[706] Griffiths, R. et al (2003), "Capitalising on Culture: Cities and the Changing Landscape of Cultural Policy," *Policy and Politics,* vol.31, no.2, pp.153-169 (p.156)

[707] Jones, M. and Ward, K. (2004), "Neo-Liberalism, Crisis and the City: The Political Economy of New Labour's Urban Policy" in *New Horizons in British Urban Policy: Perspectives on New Labour's Urban Renaissance*, eds. C. Johnstone and C. Whitehead, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.143-155 (pp.143-144)

[708] Boland, P. (2010), "'Capital of Culture - You Must Be Having a Laugh!' Challenging the Official Rhetoric of Liverpool as the 2008 European Cultural Capital," *Social and Cultural Geography,* vol.11, no.7, pp.627-645 (p.635)

[709] Murden, J. (2006), "'City of Change and Challenge: Liverpool since 1945" in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. J. Belchem, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.393-485 (p.482)

Fig. 3.3.1 Aerial view of Grosvenor's Liverpool One development

The creation of a shopping centre in Liverpool that largely caters for wealthier customers, and is accessible only by relatively high-cost public transport or expensive city-centre car parking, has exacerbated the problem of gentrification which occurred as a consequence of regeneration projects, such as the Albert Dock and the FACT Centre in the Ropewalks, incorporating cultural developments. Gentrification was first defined by Ruth Glass in 1964 and was used to explain the transformation of some residential areas of London.

> One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences…The current social status and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their size, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighbourhoods. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced, and the whole character of the district is changed.[710]

Whilst neither Liverpool One nor the Ropewalks has a large residential population, the term gentrification is still of relevance as it has evolved to become shorthand for the "supposed

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[710] Glass, R. (1964), "Aspects of Change" in *London: Aspects of Change*, ed. Centre for Urban Studies, London: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd, pp.xiii-xlii (pp.xviii-xix)

emergence of a new middle class,"[711] and with arts and culture still frequently seen as a preserve of the wealthy, gentrification as a side-effect of culture-led regeneration has become both commonplace and "seemingly normal."[712]

At its inception, the term gentrification was a means of being critical of the effects of regeneration,[713] but it is important to note that gentrification is not a solely negative process. In recent years, there has been an increasing attempt by government to highlight the positive and 'inclusive' potential of gentrification,[714] and projects such as Liverpool One have been successful in delivering a more enjoyable shopping experience which attracts people to the city. However, both the Albert Dock and Liverpool One have been criticised for failing to represent the interests and incomes of local residents and, therefore, it must be asked whether projects with a strong focus on the city centre can "help entire neighbourhoods begin a renewed life"[715] when such a small percentage of the city's population resides there. This is a particularly important issue in Liverpool where many residential areas continue to register as the most deprived in the country,[716] yet despite this, the majority of investment has been in the city centre. This approach has been seen in many other UK cities, and the cultural regeneration that took place on the NewcastleGateshead Quayside, which included the opening of the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Arts in 2002 and the Sage music venue in 2004, was similarly criticised for failing to tackle wider social problems in the area.[717]

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[711] Smith, N. and Williams, P. (1986), "Alternatives to Orthodoxy: Invitation to a Debate" in *Gentrification of the City*, eds. N. Smith and P. Williams, Boston: Allen and Unwin, pp.1-12 (p.7)

[712] Paton, K. (2009), "Probing the Symptomatic Silences of Middle-Class Settlement: A Case Study of Gentrification Processes in Glasgow," *City,* vol.13, no.4, pp.433-450 (p.434); Smith, N. (1996), *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City,* London and New York: Routledge, p.36

[713] Lees, L. et al (2008), *Gentrification,* London and New York: Routledge, p.217

[714] ibid., p.199

[715] Zulaika, J. (2003), *Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa: Museums, Architecture, and City Renewal,* Reno: Centre for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, p.66

[716] BBC (2012), "Church Urban Fund Finds 'Poorest' in North-West England," *BBC Online*, 21 May 2012 (Online)

[717] See Miles 2006; Miles 2005; Miles and Paddison 2005

Fig. 3.3.2 NewcastleGateshead Quayside: The Sage (far left) and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (centre)

The regeneration projects in both Newcastle and Liverpool were particularly vulnerable to criticism because they involved the creation of new cultural institutions whose success at embedding into existing cultural networks could not be guaranteed. They do, however, reveal the need for the integration of a broad range of policy areas when incorporating culture into urban regeneration, and it is important to note that the changes that have taken place in Liverpool city centre over the last thirty years have not been the outcome of a stand-alone policy, but rather signify a range of socio-economic factors that needed to be addressed.[718] However, regeneration projects such as the development of the FACT Centre relied upon the efforts of art organisations themselves to secure investment, although with museums and galleries being increasingly used to tackle social exclusion, greater funding opportunities have been made available. This has been most clearly demonstrated by cultural expenditure in Liverpool in the run-up to the ECoC year in 2008 which, having been awarded in 2003, coincided with the commencement of the Liverpool One project.

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[718] Williams, P. (1986), "Class Constitution Through Spatial Reconstruction? A Re-Evaluation of Gentrification in Australia, Britain, and the United States" in *Gentrification of the City*, eds. N. Smith and P. Williams, Boston: Allen and Unwin, pp.56-77 (p.73)

3.3.3 European Capital of Culture and Glasgow 1990

The ECoC was established in 1985 by the EU[719] with the intention of offering cities across Europe an opportunity to host a year-long celebration of their individual and diverse cultures. ECoC status rotates between the member states, with selection taking place five years prior to the year of the award. Liverpool's bid was prepared between 2000 and 2002, and the Council of the European Union selected it from a list of cities nominated by the host country in 2003 as the 2008 award winner.[720] Since its inception, Britain has hosted the ECoC year twice, in 1990 and 2008, and the first competition saw the selection of Glasgow over the relatively wealthy cities of Bath, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Bristol, and the more economically troubled cities of Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool and Swansea.[721] Choosing Glasgow to be Britain's first ECoC was seen as an opportunity to tackle some of the city's acute socio-economic problems through an extensive culture-led regeneration strategy, an approach that was widely adopted by subsequent host cities.[722]

Fig. 3.3.3 Glasgow's European City of Culture logo, 1990

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[719] When the ECoC was first introduced, the scheme was called City of Culture and the EU was entitled the European Community. For consistency, the current terminology will be employed here.

[720] As of 2007 and, therefore, for the 2013 title onwards, the selection is made by the host country under guidelines set out by the European Commission (European Commission (2010), *Choosing a Capital* (Online))

[721] Booth, P. and Boyle, R. (1993), "See Glasgow, See Culture" in *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*, eds. F. Bianchini and M. Parkinson, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, pp.21-47 (p.34)

[722] Garcia, B. et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p.12

Glasgow 1990 has been heralded as one of the more successful ECoC events because of its culture-led regeneration programme, and this was achieved by using the construction of cultural institutions as a catalyst for economic regeneration.[723] As such, Glasgow 1990 was a "watershed" moment in ECoC planning and delivery because it integrated into broad urban regeneration schemes the cultural component of the programme.[724] Glasgow 1990 preceded the New Labour joined-up policy approach, but by the time the Labour government formed in 1997, the project had been evaluated as largely successful because it increased tourist numbers and provided broader economic benefits by "generating low-wage jobs and benefiting élites."[725] Furthermore, the city can be understood as having established an international cultural profile following the construction of some flagship arts and cultural centres, including the McLellan Galleries and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, or Clyde Auditorium, which have been used as an additional strand of a diverse economic strategy.[726]

Fig. 3.3.4 Clyde Auditorium, Finnieston Street, Glasgow

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[723] Lorente, J.P. (2000), "Art Neighbourhoods, Ports of Vitality" in *Locality, Regeneration and Divers[c]ities*, eds. S. Bennett and J. Butler, Bristol and Portland: Intellect Books, pp.79-97 (p.94)

[724] Griffiths, R. (2006), "City/Culture Discourse: Evidence from the Competition to Select the European Capital of Culture 2008," *European Planning Studies,* vol.14, no.4, pp.415-430 (p.417-418)

[725] Garcia, B. (2005), "Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990," *Urban Studies,* vol.42, no.5/6, pp.841-868 (p.845)

[726] Tretter, E.M. (2009), "The Cultures of Capitalism: Glasgow and the Monopoly of Culture," *Antipode,* vol.41, no.1, pp.111-132 (p.113); Mooney, G. (2004), "Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990," *Local Economy,* vol.19, no.4, pp.327-340 (p.329); Booth and Boyle (1993), "See Glasgow, See Culture," p.34

However, these successes are less easily quantified when surveying the continued socio-economic profile of Glasgow, and critics of Glasgow 1990 have claimed that ECoC status did not demonstrate a "clear contribution to local economic development" because there was a lack of tangible long-term policies, job creation or training, compared to the rhetoric surrounding the event.[727] Booth and Boyle state that this is due to both the economy and culture needing to be entrenched in the community to function fully,[728] and they suggest that an imposed cultural programme for a single year could not be expected to achieve this. Consequently, it can be argued that programmes like the ECoC can do little but "provide a gloss"[729] for its hosts, and in the case of Glasgow it was successful in doing this for the one-year period of the award, but cannot necessarily be claimed to have done so in the long term.

3.3.4 Bidding for the European Capital of Culture

Britain's second ECoC competition saw the selection of Liverpool from a shortlist of Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Oxford and NewcastleGateshead, with the latter widely perceived to be the favoured choice. The obvious parallel between Liverpool and Glasgow, as "places of contradiction, of division, of inequality, of great wealth and of immense poverty,"[730] and as hosts of International Garden Festivals in 1984 and 1988 respectively, was highlighted by Liverpool in its bid for ECoC 2008 and, having lost to Glasgow in both the ECoC 1990 and City of Architecture and Design 1999[731] awards, they looked to the Scottish city to shape its bid.

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[727] Booth and Boyle (1993), "See Glasgow, See Culture," p.45
[728] ibid., p.46
[729] Mooney (2004), "Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990," p.336
[730] ibid., p.339
[731] The City of Architecture and Design was part of the ARTS 2000 scheme which intended "to celebrate Britain's artistic achievements and lay the foundations for cultural life in a new millennium." Moviola was involved in a city-wide team that prepared the bid for this award. (*Arts 2000 Leaflet*, (Available: FACT Archive, Box – Admin General 1; Folder – City of Architecture))

> The template of Glasgow, which made such a success of their City
> of Culture year in 1990, sits most comfortably on Liverpool.
> Glasgow, a great seaport and ship-building city, with a remarkable
> population, magnificent buildings and a stirring history, looking for
> a new place in the world, determined to take on the new without
> abandoning the old, with a successful city rival 30 miles down the
> road – this could be Liverpool.[732]

This statement was made in Liverpool's bid for ECoC 2008, which openly recognised Glasgow's success, and in an attempt to appeal to the EU decision-makers, the city stated that Glasgow 1990 was "exactly the model" upon which its own would be built.[733]

Liverpool's bid for ECoC 2008 was prepared by Liverpool Culture Company, an organisation that was established in 2000 by Liverpool City Council, with Professor Peter Toyne, Vice Chancellor of Liverpool John Moores University, Councillor Mike Storey, Leader of Liverpool City Council, and David Henshaw, Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council, registered as the first Directors. By the end of 2000, the Culture Company had appointed seven more Directors,[734] and by the time the award was announced in 2003, there were twelve in total.[735] The Culture Company, led at this point by Toyne, was tasked to prepare and submit the bid for the ECoC, and it has been reported that this was done with low expectations of success, despite the seniority of those on the Culture Company Board.

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[732] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.1101
[733]ibid., p.701
[734] The Directors appointed in December 2000 were: Gideon Ben-Tovim (University of Liverpool); Wally Brown (Principal, Liverpool Community College); Richard Foster (Director, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside); Dorothy Kuya (Local Historian); Stuart Melhuish (CEO, Amaze Media); Sir Bob Scott (Businessman); and Brenda Smith (Group UK Managing Director, Ascent Media)
[735] By the end of 2003, Graeme Creer had replaced David Henshaw as Company Secretary, Gideon Ben-Tovim and Stuart Melhuish had left the Culture Company, and Richard Foster had passed away. The new Directors to join the Board: Joe Anderson (Leader of the Opposition, Liverpool City Council); Tom Bloxham (Chair, ACE North West); Professor Drummond Bone (Vice Chancellor, University of Liverpool); Louise Ellman (MP for Riverside); and David Fleming (Director, National Museums Liverpool)

> The local authorities have openly acknowledged that expectations extended no further than the initial boost simply of bidding for the coveted and prestigious award to be judged alongside more favoured (and less denigrated) locations.[736]

Nevertheless, the bid demonstrated "very high aspirations for its ECoC year and made ambitious promises,"[737] including claims that the award would provide an opportunity for the whole city to be regenerated through boosting tourism which would, ultimately, enhance the quality of life for the city's residents.[738]

The bid document explicitly aligned the Culture Company's aims with EU and national government policy, and the vision that was outlined was to use the ECoC to place Liverpool's cultural offer and, therefore, the city, within an international and national context, as well as appealing to a broad spectrum of local residents. From the outset, the Culture Company asserted the city's difference from others, stating that it is "unconventional, pioneering [and] unpredictable" and exists "on the edge of Europe, the edge of America, and the edge of Africa, on the fault-lines of culture."[739] Despite the claim that Liverpool was at the confluence of many different cultures, the bid stated that the city mirrored the aspirations of Europe, which included the reinvention of the member states and the repositioning of the EU within the world economy to enable the regeneration of post-industrial cities and economies.[740] Aligning with these aspirations, the Culture Company outlined its aims for Liverpool's ECoC year as being to "confirm Liverpool as a premier European city, to empower an inclusive and dynamic community, and to achieve long-lasting cultural and economic benefits for future generations."[741]

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[736] Belchem, J. (2007), "The New Livercool: History, Culture and Identity on Merseyside" in *Thinking Northern: Textures of Identity in the North of England*, ed. C. Ehland, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, pp.217-238 (p.231)

[737] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.60

[738] Avery, P. (2007), "Born Again: from Dock Cities to Cities of Culture" in *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*, ed. M.K. Smith, Wallingford: CAB International, pp.151-162 (p.152)

[739] Liverpool Culture Company 2002

[740] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.201

[741] Liverpool Culture Company 2002

These ambitious claims were well received by Europe, and despite the expectation that NewcastleGateshead would be awarded ECoC 2008 status, the Culture Company's bid was successful. In the aftermath of this decision, the Culture Company underwent a significant restructuring process which led to it having, at its peak, twenty-five Directors on its Board, an illustrious collection of representatives from the city's universities, businesses, local and national politics, and cultural industries.[742] Under this new structure, the Culture Company outlined a vision that the programme for 2008 would be built around the central theme of 'The World in One City' and would be supported by six objectives to enable them to achieve its aims. The objectives for Liverpool's ECoC year were:

1. To create and present the best of local, national and international art and events in all genres
2. To build community enthusiasm, creativity and participation
3. Maintain, enhance and grow the cultural infrastructure of the city
4. To increase the levels of visitors and inward investment in the city
5. To reposition Liverpool as a world class city by 2008
6. To provide efficient and effective management of the Liverpool Culture Company Programme[743]

These objectives clearly situate the cultural programme of the ECoC within concurrent processes of economic rejuvenation and urban regeneration, as was seen with Glasgow 1990, although there have been criticisms that this approach sidelines the true culture of

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[742] The Liverpool Culture Company Directors, as listed in their Business Plan, 2005-2009, were: Professor Drummond Bone, Chairman (Vice Chancellor, University of Liverpool); Cllr Mike Storey CBE, Deputy Chair (Leader of Liverpool City Council); Loyd Grossman OBE, Deputy Chair (Chairman, National Museums Liverpool); Susan Woodward OBE, Deputy Chair (Managing Director, Granada); Sir David Henshaw, Chief Executive (Liverpool City Council); Graeme Creer, Company Secretary (City Solicitor, Liverpool City Council); Cllr Joe Anderson (Leader of the Opposition, Liverpool City Council); Tom Bloxham MBE (Chair, ACE North West); Cllr Warren Bradley (Liverpool City Council); Professor Michael Brown DL (Vice Chancellor, Liverpool John Moores University); Wally Brown CBE (Principal, Liverpool Community College); Sir Neil Cossons OBE (Chairman, English Heritage); Louise Ellman (MP for Riverside); Cllr Steve Foulkes (Leader, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council); Ruth Gould (Creative Director, North West Disability Arts Forum); Bryan Gray MBE (Chairman, Northwest Regional Development Agency); Bernard Hogan-Howe (Chief Constable, Merseyside Police); Roger Lewis (Chairman, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic); Pat Loughrey (Director, BBC Nations & Regions); David McDonnell CBE DL (Chief Executive Officer, Grant Thornton International); Roy Morris DL (Chairman, The Mersey Partnership); Sir Bob Scott (International Director, Liverpool Culture Company); Sir Nicholas Serota (Director, Tate); Brenda Smith (Group UK Managing Director, Ascent Media); Andrew Worthington MBE (Chair, Sport England's Northwest Regional Sports Board). (Liverpool Culture Company (2005), *Strategic Business Plan 2005-2009*, p.28)
[743] ibid., p.18

the city and prevents it from being the focus of the celebrations.[744] Nevertheless, it is clear that the project was intended to be used as a means of tackling Liverpool's acute socio-economic problems and improving its urban fabric.[745]

Irrespective of whether aims of this magnitude could be achieved in a single year, or even during the four year prelude to ECoC 2008, the Culture Company stated that there would be additional cultural spending of £3.5 million per annum between 2003 and 2008, with a further £3 million in 2007 and £4.8 million in 2008.[746] Its strategic approach was an overt attempt to align Liverpool's ECoC aims and objectives with key EU policy areas which centred on "regeneration, unemployment, new technologies and cultural identity,"[747] and the Culture Company claimed that its expenditure, and the financial support the city would receive as a consequence of being the ECoC, would enable them to reinvigorate the city's economy by over £500 million in revenue and 14,000 jobs.[748] Investment of this nature was presented as a means of generating growth and sustainability across a number of different sectors, with the cultural environment being improved by making Liverpool a more appealing city for artists and cultural practitioners to live and work in, than it was previously, and the potential outcomes and economic projections were based, in part, on the outcome of Glasgow 1990, Antwerp 1993 and Rotterdam 2001.[749] The assumption was that cultural festivals could help to improve local economies through investment and increased tourism,[750] but the economic conditions, at least after 2008, differed significantly from the 1990s, as demonstrated by the commencement of the global recession which was in direct contrast to the boom years of the 1990s that followed Glasgow's ECoC.

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[744] Boland (2010), "'Capital of Culture - You Must Be Having a Laugh!' Challenging the Official Rhetoric of Liverpool as the 2008 European Cultural Capital," p.639

[745] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.60

[746] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.701

[747] Selwood, S. (2009), "Liverpool, Art City?" in *Art in a City Revisited*, eds. B. Biggs and J. Sheldon, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.53-89 (p.82)

[748] Avery (2007), "Born Again: from Dock Cities to Cities of Culture," p.155

[749] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.701

[750] West, H.M. and Scott-Samuel, A. (2010), "Creative Potential: Mental Well-being Impact Assessment of the Liverpool 2008 European Capital of Culture Programme," *Public Health,* vol.124, pp.198-205 (p.199)

These aims left the ECoC year in Liverpool open to criticisms of allowing the "politicisation of culture,"[751] and this problem was exacerbated by the composition of the Culture Company board. This was particularly problematic in a city where the cultural scene was rooted in grassroots arts practice, and politics had been a long-standing source of conflict, especially as the Militant Tendency's control of Liverpool City Council between 1983 and 1986 had left the city with a reputation for the mismanagement of its own affairs. This was particularly true of cultural policy, with Liverpool's municipal museums being removed from the city's control in 1985 resulting in the creation of National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGM). Similar concerns of mismanagement were raised during the ECoC planning stages when the Artistic Director, Robyn Archer, left the Culture Company unexpectedly. Archer, a singer and festival producer who had previously worked on the Adelaide Festival of Arts and Melbourne International Arts Festival in her native Australia, was appointed in April 2004, although the *Liverpool Daily Echo* stated that she was not expected to live in the city until 2006.[752] Local newspaper coverage of Archer became increasingly hostile as by January 2006 she still did not have a visa to work in Britain,[753] and whilst she arrived in the city a few months later, she left her post by July of the same year.[754] The reasons for her departure are unclear, although Councillor Storey was quoted as saying that it was "quite the opposite" of a disaster.[755] Her appointment was only covered by the local media, but the controversy surrounding her departure, and reports of in-fighting amongst the Culture Company's Board of Directors, attracted national interest.[756] The post of Artistic Director remained vacant until television producer and scriptwriter Phil Redmond was appointed as the Creative Director in September 2007,[757] and at the same time that he was appointed, the Culture Company underwent another significant restructuring which reduced the Board to seven, including existing members Professor Drummond Bone, Councillor Mike Storey, Tom Bloxham and Bryan Gray, as well

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[751] Boland (2010), "'Capital of Culture - You Must Be Having a Laugh!' Challenging the Official Rhetoric of Liverpool as the 2008 European Cultural Capital," p.639. See also Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004

[752] Riley, J. (2004), "Leading Oz Director is Arts Chief," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, 29 April 2004

[753] Lister, S. (2006a), "Culture Chiefs Pledge: We Won't Let You Down. But Still No Word from the Woman in Charge of Events for 2008," *Liverpool Daily Post*, 6 January 2006

[754] Liverpool 08 (2006), *Artistic Director Leaves Culture Company* (Online)

[755] Lister, S (2006b), "No Tears, She Was Hard Work: Archer's Departure, Background and Reaction," *Liverpool Daily Post*, 5 July 2006

[756] See Coslett 2006; Ward 2006; Topping 2008

[757] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.16

as Phil Redmond and new Company Secretary Anthony Wilson, Senior Partner of Hill Dickinson law firm.

Upon taking the post, Phil Redmond described the ECoC in Liverpool as "a Scouse wedding – a lot of rowing but we get there in the end,"[758] and whilst perhaps intended as a light-hearted comment on the management of the ECoC, it makes a clear statement about the credibility of the planning process before Redmond joined.[759] As Dave O'Brien stated in 2011:

> Problems associated with the administration of the build up to 2008 are exemplified by the evolution of the Culture Company's board, whereby the role and size of the board was subject to several, confused and confusing, reorganisations. The enthusiasm generated by the bid gave way to practical political questions over funding, control and influence over the event and the organisation structures which had allowed cultural policy to function.

Consequently, despite the Culture Company being accountable to the DCMS, the local politics of the city impacted on the planning stages of the ECoC, and the interruption to the artistic direction of the programme was felt most considerably by the arts and cultural organisations of Liverpool. Of these, only NML, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Tate, had been officially represented on the Culture Company Board, although since 2004 its Chair, Drummond Bone, was also the Chair of FACT's Board. As a consequence of this lack of representation, and with the uncertainty regarding the artistic direction of the ECoC, a number of Liverpool's leading arts organisations formed a network in 2006 that would more effectively represent their own interests.   This network, the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC), comprised the Bluecoat, FACT, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, NML, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tate Liverpool and

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[758] BBC (2008), "City Enjoys Culture Capital Party," *BBC Online*, 11 January 2008 (Online). See also Redmond 2011

[759] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.60

Unity Theatre,[760] and they worked alongside the Culture Company to ensure that LARC's programming for 2008 coincided with the broader vision for the city.[761]

Fig. 3.3.5 Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) logo

Many of the LARC partners, especially the visual arts organisations, had a history of collaborating with each other for city-wide events which have been part of Liverpool's cultural calendar since the first Video Positive festival in 1989. However, whilst LARC served to formalise these relationships, their vision extended beyond arts and cultural provision and LARC defined itself as an informal network which uses art and culture in regeneration to "change lives far beyond the confines of the concert hall, theatre, museum and gallery."[762]

3.3.5 FACT's Role in Liverpool 2008

Despite this overt inclusion of regeneration, the ECoC programme is about celebrating culture. Depending on the host city, the status can be used to champion existing cultural heritage or it can be a means of developing new forms of cultural practice. As we have

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[760] National Museums Liverpool are no longer listed as a member of LARC (LARC (2011), *About LARC* (Online))
[761] O'Brien, D., (2011), "Who is in Charge? Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008 and the Governance of Cultural Planning," *Town Planning Review,* vol.82, no.1, pp.45-59 (p.55)
[762] LARC (2011), *About LARC* (Online)

seen, culture in Liverpool was well established at the time that the city won the ECoC award, and with the disruption to the planning process due to upheaval within the Culture Company, the cultural organisations of Liverpool played a significant role in the planning and delivery of the year-long celebrations. As discussed above, LARC was important to the delivery of a coherent arts programme throughout 2008, and as one of LARC's members, FACT's role was notable despite the relative youthfulness of the organisation. When LARC was formed in 2006, FACT had only been in existence for twenty-one years, but it had established itself as one of Liverpool's eight major art and cultural institutions, with only the Liverpool Biennial of LARC's members being a younger organisation.[763] This can, in part, be attributed to it having been instrumental in the development of the cultural network that gave rise to LARC, having collaborated with Tate Liverpool, the Bluecoat, and the Walker Art Gallery of NML for Video Positive, having historic links with the Unity Theatre and Everyman Theatre, and subsequently contributing to each Liverpool Biennial.

Throughout the planning stages of ECoC, the LARC members had been included in the Culture Company's city-wide themed years, which commenced in 2003 with the Year of Learning,[764] and encouraged the city's cultural organisations to design their programme around a broad topic. However, with the exception of '2006 Liverpool Performs (Art, Business, Sport)' and the ECoC year itself, none of these themed years was explicitly about art. This raises questions about who the ECoC year was aimed towards, with Philip Boland suggesting that the Culture Company was more concerned with "external audiences, salaried elites and cultural consumers," than supporting the cultural organisations of Liverpool, or affording the people of the city, from whom its culture had developed, with greater access to, and understanding of, the arts.[765]

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[763] Having been founded in 1988, Tate Liverpool was also younger from FACT but it was established with the weight of almost 100 years of experience and history from its parent company, which was founded in 1897.

[764] Liverpool Culture Company's themed years were: 2003 Year of Learning; 2004 Faith in One City; 2005 Sea Liverpool; 2006 Liverpool Performs (Art, Business, Sport); 2007 800th Birthday (Year of Heritage); 2008 European Capital of Culture; 2009 Year of the Environment; 2010 Year of Health, Wellbeing and Innovation (Liverpool Culture Company (2005), *Strategic Business Plan 2005-2009*, p.10; Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.13)

[765] Boland (2010), "'Capital of Culture - You Must Be Having a Laugh!' Challenging the Official Rhetoric of Liverpool as the 2008 European Cultural Capital," p.639

The disjunction between the motives of the Culture Company and the work of LARC's members does not denigrate the latter's importance, however, and FACT played a key role in the underpinning strategy of the ECoC: the use of culture within regeneration. As its name suggests, and having been founded during the planning stages of ECoC, LARC clearly asserted its intention to place art within regeneration strategies. Many of the buildings that housed LARC's members had been part of broader regeneration plans, with Tate Liverpool being at the heart of the Albert Dock development in 1988 and NML undergoing a ground-up regeneration project on the Liverpool Waterfront, although the new Museum of Liverpool did not open until July 2012. Of more relevance, however, was the FACT Centre regeneration project in the Ropewalks area of the city, which opened in 2003, only a few months before the ECoC 2008 award was announced, and it was through this development that FACT made its most notable contribution to Liverpool 2008.

The FACT Centre project was not planned in conjunction with the ECoC, but it was located in an area that was earmarked for investment during 2008,[766] although this was ultimately overshadowed by Grosvenor's Liverpool One development. Liverpool One and the main cultural events of the ECoC year were focused on the city centre and this placed the Ropewalks on the periphery of the main activity of ECoC and, therefore, much of the proposed redevelopment in the area did not take place. However, the FACT Centre provided an example of culture-led regeneration whereby a flagship institution is used as a catalyst for investment. This example was cited in the Culture Company's bid document in 2002, and despite FACT having no official involvement in the bid's preparation, the new FACT Centre, which was scheduled to open in late 2002 but was delayed until February 2003, was used as a symbol of positive change in the city.[767] This was because it provided an example of how the city mirrored the aspirations of the EU by being committed to "regenerating the industrial landscape."[768]

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[766] Jones, P. and Evans, J. (2008), *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp.132-133

[767] Berg, interviewed by the author, 26 January 2010

[768] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.201

> The latest evidence of such goals made fact is, indeed, FACT, the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, whose new centre will be opened in 2002. FACT is an organisation that has built its strength and reputation on involving European and international partners in its work as the cornerstone of its success at home.[769]

This clearly states the importance of FACT within the Culture Company's bid, and it was an opportunity for the city to assert its cultural heritage against the favourite for the ECoC 2008 award, NewcastleGateshead, which had recently opened the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art on the banks of the River Tyne.

This somewhat inadvertent role in ECoC planning was followed by the delivery of one of FACT's most ambitious artistic programmes throughout 2008. The year-long series of exhibitions, entitled 'Human Futures,' were challenging and diverse, and included works by renowned media artists such as AL and AL[770] and the UK premiere of Pipilotti Rist's *Gravity Be My Friend* (2007) and *Open My Glade* (2000).[771]

(L) **Fig. 3.3.6** Pipilotti Rist, *Gravity Be My Friend* (2007) installation at FACT, 2008

(R) **Fig. 3.3.7** Pipilotti Rist, *Open My Glade* (2000) installation at FACT, 2008

FACT's opening show of the Human Futures year was an exhibition of fifteen international artists, 'sk-interfaces,'[772] which received positive reviews in the national media[773] and registered as the most popular exhibition in the organisation's history, with 22,000 visitors

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[769] ibid.

[770] AL and AL is the name used by visual artists and filmmakers AL Holmes and AL Taylor, who have worked together since the late 1990s. For more information, see AL and AL 2012

[771] FACT (2008a), *Pipilotti Rist Unveils Two UK Premieres at FACT* (Online)

[772] FACT (2007), *sk-interfaces Launches FACT's 2008 Programme* (Online)

[773] Hickling, A. (2008), "*sk-interfaces*, FACT, Liverpool," *The Guardian*, 2 February 2008

over two months.[774]   The Human Futures programme provided an interesting example of FACT's ethos by combining:

> Internationally renowned artists, writers and designers to stimulate new forms of interaction with the future, in ways that transcend the borders between the physical, virtual, biological and digital.[775]

This was an overt statement that the organisation was concerned with art, technology and science, and that it remained committed to pushing boundaries in the exploration of "the art of the future,"[776] thus showcasing its core interests during a year that was guaranteed to attract significant attention. The assimilation of the exhibitions within the Human Futures programme is apparent,[777] but it is less obvious where this fitted into the ECoC theme for 2008 of 'The World in One City,' aside from the inclusion of international artists. This, and the extent of LARC's involvement within the themed years from 2003–2008, raises some questions about the level of integration between the artistic programme of individual art organisations and that of the Culture Company, and the disparity between these agendas offers an insight into the way the members of LARC, having established themselves as separate to the Culture Company, saw their own role in the ECoC year.

3.3.6 Understanding Cultural Legacy

FACT's role in ECoC planning and delivery, which would appear to be surprisingly limited given the importance of Liverpool's art institutions to the city's cultural identity, is incomplete without some consideration of the long-term impact that the ECoC celebrations had on the organisation. Analysis of the legacy of the ECoC model has demonstrated "the complex nature of intangible cultural legacies [which] makes it difficult to conclude whether they are a direct result of a particular event or culture-led regeneration strategy."[778] Consequently, the focus of studies on the impact of ECoC has been on its use as a tool for urban regeneration, rather than focusing on a celebration of the existing cultural identity of

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[774] FACT (2008b), *sk-interfaces Breaks FACT Exhibition Record* (Online)

[775] Miah, A. (ed.) (2008), *Human Futures: Art in an Age of Uncertainty*, Liverpool: FACT and Liverpool University Press, p.i

[776] Hickling (2008), "*sk-interfaces*, FACT, Liverpool," *The Guardian*, 2 February 2008

[777] See Miah 2008

[778] Garcia (2005), "Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990," p.862

the host city. Glasgow 1990 is cited as a typical example of the use of culture as a catalyst for change and, as discussed above, it was this ECoC model that shaped the bid and aims of the Culture Company. With ambitious aims that stated their intention to use ECoC to reinvigorate Liverpool's economy, by creating jobs and attracting more tourists and spending in the city, studies of the legacy of Liverpool 2008 have primarily focused on the socio-economic impacts of the increased investment that the status attracted.

In 2005, Liverpool City Council commissioned a team of researchers from the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University to work on a five-year project that evaluated how the ECoC programme was employed, and what impact it had on the city. The Impacts 08 research group was financed directly and indirectly by local, national and European government, with funding from Liverpool City Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, ACE and the European Commission,[779] and the ensuing reports present an analysis of the events of the ECoC, from bid to delivery, and study a range of impacts on the economy, the city and the cultural complexion of Liverpool.[780] However, having been commissioned and funded by the main stakeholders in Liverpool 2008, the reports paint a largely positive picture of the year, and whilst they provide useful statistics, these statistics are difficult to verify and the nature of its funding raises some questions about its impartiality.
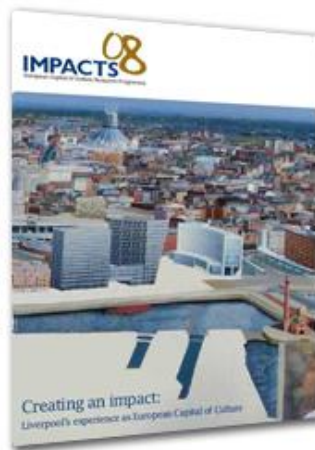
Fig. 3.3.8 Impacts 08, *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, 2010

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[779] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.63
[780] For all Impacts 08 reports, see University of Liverpool (2012), *Impacts 08 – European Capital of Culture Research Programme* (Online)

Nevertheless, the cultural legacy of Liverpool 2008 is more tangible, and much has been made of the idea that Scousers feel better about their city as a consequence of the ECoC celebrations,[781] which has led to Liverpool City Council taking the idea of city-wide themed years and launching, in 2010, an initiative entitled '2020 Decade of Health and Wellbeing.'[782] This scheme utilises the well-established network of collaborative partners in Liverpool, and brings together community groups, local businesses, charities and art organisations, to build on the greater sense of civic pride that was reported following 2008 to develop "a healthier city region with a greater sense of wellbeing."[783] At its core, this scheme accepts the claim of the Impacts 08 team that culture is "more widely accepted as a driver for economic change, health and social inclusion,"[784] although Liverpool 2008 also reveals the lack of full integration of culture into regeneration strategies.

However, the notion of improved civic pride led to an improvement in the image of the city, both internally and externally, and this was reflected in the national media. The media played a significant role in the perpetuation of a negative image of Liverpool following years of economic decline and associated social problems in the city, but *Creating an Impact* (2010) reported that, in 2008, there was a 71% increase in positive stories in the national media than in the previous year.[785] This was claimed to have contributed to a decline in negative impressions of the city on a national level from 20–14%.[786] This perception of improvement has been well supported in the wealth of literature on Liverpool and its cultural history, published both directly before, and in the immediate aftermath of, the ECoC year,[787] with many of these texts supporting the claims of the Impacts 08 reports. This has had a knock-on effect on Liverpool's cultural institutions, which benefitted from increased levels of tourism, and they too have recognised the changing feeling in the city. In interviews with many of the city's leading art professionals, the rhetorical question of where the city would be today, particularly in the context of global recession, without the

[781] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.59
[782] 2020 Decade of Health and Wellbeing (2012), *Home* (Online)
[783] Liverpool City Council (2012), *2020 Health and Wellbeing* (Online)
[784] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.59
[785] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.40; O'Brien (2011), "Who is in Charge? Liverpool, European Capital of Culture 2008 and the Governance of Cultural Planning," p.47
[786] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.46
[787] See, for example, Belchem and Biggs 2011a; McBane 2008; Allt 2008; Belchem 2006; Belchem 2000

expenditure that accompanied ECoC was frequently raised,[788] but this also requires the question of whether situating culture within wider political debates denigrates art and culture, which are worthy of celebration in their own right, to be asked[789]

The celebration of culture, however, was facilitated during the planning and delivery of the ECoC year by a significant increase in funding for Liverpool's leading art organisations. Liverpool City Council increased its support between 2002/3 and 2008/9 by 84%, and the ACE increased the number of RFOs in the city from 15–24, with a 176% rise in funding from £2.7 million–£7.5 million over the same period. This was in comparison with a 30% increase in RFO budgets nationally, and for the LARC organisations, it contributed to a total budget of £73 million during the ECoC year itself.[790] FACT, one of the ACE's original RFOs, which receives about £1 million annually, enjoyed an overall increase in its budget of 10%, and its Programme Director during 2008, Laura Sillars, stated that one third of this budget was used to establish, in partnership with Cornerhouse, Manchester,[791] a festival of new cinema, digital culture and art, Abandon Normal Devices (AND), which was launched in 2009 after the conclusion of the ECoC, and is ongoing today. The remaining two thirds of FACT's budget funded its ambitious artistic programme for 2008,[792] and this would suggest that the immediate impact on Liverpool's cultural institutions was both obvious and significant.

However, the aftermath of Liverpool 2008, which coincided with a global recession that was largely unforeseen in its scale, has led to a decline in the financial support available to art organisations across Britain. The declining budgets in Liverpool, particularly after such a significant increase, has been exacerbated by the current national government, a coalition between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, having made deep cuts to arts funding. This has led to many of Liverpool's art organisations losing resources and staff,

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[788] Biggs, interviewed by the author, 5 December 2011; Redmond, A. (FACT Ambassador Patron), interviewed by the author, 31 January 2012; Stubbs, interviewed by the author, 7 January 2010
[789] Biggs, interviewed by the author, 5 December 2011
[790] Garcia et al (2010), *Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture*, p.33
[791] For more information on the AND festival, see Abandon Normal Devices 2012
[792] Hawksworth, H. (2009), "Liverpool's European Capital of Culture: The Legacy," *Ideas Tap* (Online)

and others, such as James Moores' A-Foundation,[793] being dissolved due to lack of financial support. For FACT, the period that followed immediately from Liverpool 2008 was one of significant financial restructuring which forced a number of redundancies and a reassessment of its "political, social and artistic" needs, outlined in a new business plan for 2010–2013.[794] That this occurred in the aftermath of an event that had both improved the image of the city and placed Liverpool's art organisations in the spotlight for a year-long period, and within which FACT had played an important role, almost certainly aided its survival, but the success of the Culture Company's vision outlined in 2002, must be questioned. Their vision was:

> To leave an enduring legacy for the people of Liverpool...[which] centred on people and participation; stronger cultural infrastructure; a sense of pride; better physical environment; a more attractive destination for visitors and investment.[795]

Verifying the achievement of this is somewhat difficult, and whilst claims have been made that arts audiences and tourist numbers in Liverpool rose during 2008, it is unclear whether this impacted upon the people who live in the city or has endured beyond the ECoC year itself. Furthermore, improvements to the physical environment were largely funded independently of ECoC, and the cultural infrastructure of the city was already strong, if not formalised, and had been since the collaborative practice fostered by Video Positive. Consequently, as with Glasgow 1990, ECoC status has only succeeded in providing a "gloss"[796] for its hosts, particularly in the matter of civic pride, and the long-term effect on art and culture in the city is yet to be seen but would already appear to have hit difficulties. Furthermore, following the conclusion of the Impacts 08 study in 2010 and a reduction in art budgets, this legacy is unlikely to be adequately measured.

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[793] A Foundation announced its closure on 15 February 2011 after the ACE failed to award an application for 33% of their costs (A Foundation (2011), *A Foundation News* (Online))

[794] '"Are we there yet?"...A Roadmap to Future FACT', *FACT Business Plan 2010-2013*, (Available: FACT Hard-drive), p.3

[795] Liverpool Culture Company (2005), *Strategic Business Plan 2005-2009*, p.38

[796] Mooney (2004), "Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990," p.336

Conclusion

Conclusion

History does not recreate the past. The historian does not recapture the bygone event...History deals only with evidence from the past, with the residues of bygone events. But it can pass judgement upon documentation and upon observers' reports of what they thought they saw. [797]

Revisiting the Research Aims

This thesis is about change. More specifically, it is about the factors that influence change, and the impact it has on contemporary society. During the twenty-five year period under scrutiny here, the three underpinning themes of this thesis – the city as a place of continual change; media as a turning point in art practice; and the changing role of art institutions in society – have been influenced by a range of different factors, whether local, national or international, and the resulting social conditions that prevail today cannot be understood in isolation from the broader processes of change. In order to understand these changes, FACT has been used as a lens through which to study the socio-economic conditions of Liverpool, and the art practices and art institutional framework of Britain. This has been possible because FACT is a product of its environment, having grown from the local communities that surround it, and having responded to its host city's unique socio-economic and political conditions. Furthermore, FACT's innovative approach to presenting art forms that existed on the periphery of contemporary art and museum practice at the time of its foundation has led to the organisation both influencing, and being influenced by, the methods of art production that it has promoted. As such, it has been able to access greater levels of funding and, following its transformation from an arts agency to a more formal organisational structure, has become increasingly integrated into the institutional framework that governs society.

As a historical study, this thesis has had to contend with the limitations of researching an organisation that has developed in an *ad hoc* manner, with decision-making that has often been reactive, and the research has been undertaken and completed whilst FACT has

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[797] Handlin (1979), *Truth in History,* p.412

continued to develop and define its position and aims. Similarly, writing history with such proximity to the period being studied poses some challenges, but the marked shift in the political and economic environment that has been signalled by the change of national government in 2010, has provided an end date to the study. 2010 was also the year that FACT launched a new business plan which accommodates financial restructuring to suit the current times of *austerity*, a term that has been widely adopted as shorthand for the economic policies of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government at a time of global recession. It also marks the publication of the final Impacts 08 report, a study into the recent regeneration strategies that have been introduced in Liverpool, and which completes a cycle of arts and culture-led integrated policies of redevelopment that characterised the previous Labour administrations.

Answers to the Research Questions

In the Introduction, a series of research questions were outlined which have guided this thesis and enabled the study of a single art institution. This study cannot be understood in isolation from the historical and cultural context that was presented in Part 1, and it is rooted in a body of existing literature which has provided an essential theoretical and critical foundation for the concluding remarks that follow. Each of the research questions will be addressed in turn, before the presentation of some suggestions for how these observations bear relevance to other art organisations and, more importantly, society at large.

Research Question 1

To what extent, and in what ways, has FACT's development mirrored that of the city of Liverpool?

Since its establishment as Merseyside Moviola in 1985, the transformation that the organisation has undergone to become FACT has been significant. In contrast to the earlier organisation, FACT in 2010 had a new identity, structure and building, and a far bigger budget than could have been contemplated by Josie Barnard and Lisa Haskel when they

first aimed to raise the profile of film and video art in Liverpool. Liverpool, on the other hand, had not grown in size over the same period, and its population continued to decline to almost half the size at its peak in the 1930s.[798] However, it had attracted significant levels of investment to address the social problems that stemmed from the decline of Liverpool's ports as a mass employer and, with many of the resulting regeneration projects incorporating culture, the city's cultural profile had grown significantly.

As we have seen, Merseyside Moviola was established at a time of significant upheaval in Liverpool and across Britain, with the city placing itself in direct opposition to the Conservative government. By the mid-1980s, the government's economic policies met opposition from the Militant-led Liverpool City Council, and the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the 1980s, which saw higher than average levels of unemployment and poverty and below average levels of healthcare and education, led to tensions being high. The resulting social unrest in the Toxteth area of the city, and the conflict between national and local government in Liverpool, was highly publicised, and throughout the 1980s, the city was depicted as the epitome of the problems of post-industrial decline. A key policy in tackling this decline was regeneration, and the subsequent investment in the city saw a number of strategies introduced, first by the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC), and latterly by the New Labour government, which placed culture at the heart of the regeneration plans.

Having been established at the same time as the MDC's regeneration policies were being implemented, FACT benefited from the increasing amount of investment in the city, and whilst Merseyside Moviola's early projects were funded, in part, by a small number of ticket sales and were facilitated by loans from local media companies, by the end of the 1980s the organisation had secured funding from both local and national government to host the first Video Positive festival. Throughout the 1990s, Video Positive grew in size and the Collaboration Programme and Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES) sub-brands were added to FACT's programme as further funding was accessed. As discussed in

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[798] Liverpool City Council (2011), *The City of Liverpool Key Statistics Bulletin*, Issue 11, July 2011 (Online); A Vision of Britain Through Time (2009), *Liverpool, Historical Statistics: Population* (Online)

Chapter 3.2, FACT's growth culminated in its own regeneration project, the FACT Centre, and with significant capital investment from the Arts Council England (ACE), it reflected the gains made by art organisations during the economic boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

For both FACT and Liverpool, public investment was, and remains, essential, and in pursuit of greater levels of funding it aligned with national government agendas to maximise potential gains. As shown in Section 3.1.2, the development of the FACT brand in 1997 mirrored changes that were taking place within national government. The Labour Party had won a landslide General Election following the launch, in 1996, of their *new Labour: because Britain deserves better* campaign,[799] and this signalled the modernisation of British politics and the establishment of a more carefully managed image. The FACT brand reflected this approach by launching an image that demonstrated greater awareness of marketing practices, and portrayed a more professional approach than that of Moviola. By creating a more viable art brand, and with the inclusion of terminology such as *creative technology*, the organisation aimed to give a sense of history and longevity that belied its years, whilst also encapsulating New Labour's image of modernity and progress. It also aligned with the creativity agenda that was promoted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as outlined by Secretary of State Chris Smith's *Creative Britain* (1998), which linked creativity with progress.

Liverpool also recognised the need to align with government agendas, as shown in Section 3.3.3, with their bid for European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2008 clearly reflecting both the national government and the European Union's policies of integrated culture-led regeneration. Indeed, securing ECoC status in 2003 marked a change in the city's fortunes, and the additional funding opportunities provided by ECoC status encouraged a renaissance in Liverpool's city centre which looks, ostensibly, to have been largely successful. The increased level of investment in Liverpool has led to the regeneration of heritage buildings, the construction of flagship cultural institutions, and the redevelopment of shopping and leisure facilities, but only short distances away from these regeneration projects are sites of

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[799] Labour Party (1996), *New Labour: Because Britain Deserves Better* (Online)

great poverty, where living standards remain lower than in many places across Britain. This reveals the limits to the effectiveness of public funding, and whilst significant money has been spent in Liverpool, it has ultimately failed to address the underlying socio-economic problems.

FACT has benefited from the increased investment in Liverpool, and both the city and the organisation have developed more ambitious aspirations and projects which reflect greater confidence and resources. As with Liverpool's claims that ECoC would establish the city as a 'World City,'[800] suggesting that it could contend with the likes of London, New York and Paris, FACT has aimed to develop a profile of international renown, but whether either of these aims has been achieved is questionable. However, the image of both FACT and its host city has been revitalised in recent years, and as this has been made possible by the provision of public funding, this is the most obvious example of FACT mirroring Liverpool. The reliance on public funding raises issues that are addressed below, but as we have seen, the regularity and relative security of the ACE's funding has been crucial to FACT's development.

Research Question 2

How has the transformation from agency to institution impacted on FACT and its artistic, community and media programmes?

The scale of FACT's growth has been most visible through the launch of its new brand in 1997 and the opening of the FACT Centre in 2003. FACT today is almost unrecognisable from its predecessor, Merseyside Moviola, and this can be attributed to an ongoing process of institutionalisation that has redefined its objectives and role. The core aim of Merseyside Moviola was to showcase film and video art that was not otherwise accessible in Liverpool, but as was shown in Chapter 2.1, the Video Positive festivals pushed the organisation's initial aims much further. By 1995, having also launched the Collaboration Programme and MITES, Moviola had secured its position as one of the Arts Council of Great

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[800] Liverpool Culture Company (2002), *Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture*, p.901

Britain's (ACGB) Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO), and it was this status that set the organisation on the path towards becoming an institution. Its RFO status was followed by the development of the FACT brand in 1997 and the process of institutionalisation was further signalled by the planning and construction of the FACT Centre. The idea for the building was initially outlined in 1991, and was realised in 2003 due to the increased availability of capital funding following the introduction of the National Lottery in 1994 and the election success of New Labour in 1997. The resulting institutional profile had a significant impact on FACT, which had been developed as an art agency and, therefore, functioned because of the flexibility of its approach to collaborative practice and exhibitions.

The sub-brands that dominated the organisation's programme had enabled FACT to work with a range of audiences and artists, and they encouraged innovative practice regarding community arts, media art presentation and public arts programming. However, as each of the sub-brands grew, FACT's changing ambitions redefined the projects, and this was further enforced by the new institutional model that developed as a consequence of the new brand and premises. The impacts of institutionalisation were felt by each of FACT's sub-brands, with Video Positive being the most obviously affected by the FACT Centre. Although plans were in place to host a further Video Positive after 2000, the commencement of building work for the FACT Centre shifted the organisation's focus, in part because of the scale of the project, but also because the premises would fundamentally change FACT's exhibition strategy.

Having its own exhibition spaces required the development of a year-round exhibition programme, and whilst there were many factors behind the decline of Video Positive, including technological change that rendered video if not obsolete, then at least dated, the change from producing a biennial arts programme that lasted a few weeks, to programming its own galleries on a continual basis, ultimately brought about the end of the festivals. The FACT Centre positioned the organisation within a more traditional museum framework, and as was examined in Section 1.1.4, this framework dictated that FACT should fulfil a range of services, including providing an educational role. This element of the Collaboration

Programme is most evident within the FACT Centre today, as it runs in tandem with the exhibition programme, but the more innovative aspect of the Collaboration Programme that developed in the 1990s has less prominence. This is because Video Positive had once provided an exhibition structure for the Collaboration Programme's outputs, but the FACT Centre has not replicated this role. The Collaboration Programme was not given the opportunity to curate the exhibition spaces in the FACT Centre until eight years after it had opened, and as discussed in Section 2.2.5, the Knowledge Lives Everywhere exhibition at FACT in 2011 demonstrated the same limitations as The Fifth Floor exhibition at Tate Liverpool in 2008. These limitations show that current gallery practices are not yet able to effectively integrate participatory and interactive artworks, and whilst FACT, through MITES, has played an important role in placing media art in the gallery, by making the technology required for its presentation more widely available, it has not succeeded in altering the behaviours of audiences.

MITES' lack of visibility in the FACT Centre is less surprising as it is a service that operates behind the scenes, but the existence of the media centre model that the FACT Centre represents can be attributed to the better integration of media into galleries which resulted from the loans service provided by MITES since 1992, lower costs of media technology and its increasing role in society. These factors have diminished MITES' role in media art presentation and, as was seen in Section 2.3.4, the service has been restructured following the opening of the building. However, to cite the process of institutionalisation as the cause of the decline of FACT's sub-brands is overly simplistic. For Video Positive and MITES, video was being superseded by other technologies, this technology was more effectively integrated into museum practice, and the equipment for media art presentation had become more affordable. Furthermore, as was shown in Section 1.2.4, there is an increasing expectation that museums should fulfil an educational and inclusive role, and although the Collaboration Programme has been restructured, FACT has continued to provide a community art programme which operates beyond the FACT Centre and, despite its lack of visibility within the building, continues to provide a valuable and innovative model for collaborative art practice.

Consequently, the process of institutionalisation cannot be seen to have adversely affected all of FACT's sub-brands, although it has effectively redefined the organisation's purpose and aims. As suggested in Section 3.2.5, the building secured the organisation's position at a time of significant upheaval within the arts due to funding cuts, and despite the negative connotations that are intrinsically linked to the term *institution*, as outlined by Anton C. Zijderveld,[801] the process of institutionalisation, after almost a decade of transition while the organisation adjusted to its new profile, has afforded FACT a credibility that it could not have achieved without the FACT Centre.

Research Question 3

To what extent has FACT contributed to Liverpool's cultural profile, and in what ways has it impacted on the regeneration of the city?

FACT's increased credibility and institutionalised profile has been demonstrated by its establishment as one of Liverpool's leading art organisations, and its inclusion within the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) group ahead of the ECoC year in 2008 differentiated FACT from the city's smaller art organisations, which had formed their own group, the Small and Medium Arts Collective (SMAC).[802] Furthermore, FACT provided a new element to the city's cultural offer by specialising in a specific set of art practices, and they had developed a network of collaborative practice during Video Positive, as discussed in Section 3.3.3, which was essential to the organisation's exhibition strategy prior to the opening of the FACT Centre. This network was formalised during the planning stages of ECoC, and as a collaboration of the art organisations in Liverpool that are in receipt of regular funding from the ACE, it has played an important role in shaping Liverpool's cultural identity.

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[801] Zijderveld (2000), *The Institutional Imperative: The Interface of Institutions and Networks*, p.13

[802] "SMAC network was set up in 2007 and...comprises around 50 small and medium-sized arts organisations from Merseyside. Whilst there is some duplication in membership with the Arts and Cultural Network, there is no overlap with LARC member." (Impacts 08 (2009), *Liverpool's Arts Sector: Sustainability and Experience* (Online), p.16)

LARC's role in Liverpool 2008 grew from a lack of representation on the Culture Company Board during the preparation of the ECoC bid and, following concerns of mismanagement after the departure of the Artistic Director in 2006, its main function was to unite art institutions in Liverpool to deliver a cohesive programme for the ECoC year. LARC's lasting legacy has been the formalisation of a model of cross-city collaboration that is unique to Liverpool and, as its name suggests, LARC has reasserted the role of the arts in regeneration.

As was shown in Section 1.2.2, the use of culture in regeneration has been typical of Liverpool's urban policy since Michael Heseltine's MDC. This new approach to improving both the urban fabric and economy of the city through increased investment in cultural projects became widely adopted subsequently, and as discussed in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, Glasgow 1990 heavily influenced the planning and delivery of Liverpool 2008. However, as both Graeme Evans and Chris Couch suggest, culture has often been inadequately integrated into regeneration strategies, and regeneration policy in Liverpool has been imposed in an *ad hoc* manner.[803] In Liverpool this can be seen by the patchwork of cultural regeneration projects that exist across the city, and as shown in Section 3.2.1, this had led to the creation of a number of areas which lay claim to being the city's cultural quarter.

Following the investment in Liverpool's city centre during the first decade of the twenty-first century, proposed regeneration of the Ropewalks area has been most adversely affected, and after the completion of the FACT Centre many projects have stalled. The lack of continuity within regeneration is symptomatic of the lack of continuity in policy-making in Britain, and it brings into question the level of commitment to culture in its own right and not as a tool for economic rejuvenation. This reaffirms the importance of the cultural network established by Video Positive, and formalised by LARC, although the coherence of the arts and regeneration agenda of the group is not clear.

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[803] See Couch 2003; Evans 2005

Research Question 4

Can an arts organisation with international aspirations maintain relevance to its local community, and what impact does public funding have on this objective?

This question rests upon two assumptions: that FACT aims to operate within an international art institutional framework; and that it continues to pursue a community-led agenda. As shown in Section 2.1.4, Video Positive demonstrated both of these aims by developing a biennial festival model which attracted international artists and audiences, and by establishing the Collaboration Programme as part of its exhibition strategy. Although Video Positive no longer exists, the international and local aspirations remain fundamental to FACT's profile, but the dichotomy within the organisation that this causes has been problematic throughout its history.

At the core of FACT's practice has been its commitment to maintaining relevance to the city it inhabits, despite the organisation's ambitions to be understood within an international context. Its ability to pursue a local agenda has been reliant on a number of factors, including the strength of the identity of Liverpool's communities, the vibrancy of community arts practice in the city, and changes to the role of museums and galleries in society. Section 2.2.1 shows that community arts were already entrenched in Liverpool when Merseyside Moviola formed, following the work of grassroots arts organisations such as the Blackie, and the receptiveness of community groups to different art forms, despite being untypical of art consumer demographics, was essential. Furthermore, having led media art workshops since its inception as Merseyside Moviola, FACT's desire to deliver an arts programme that resonated with its local community was clear. This was based on the awareness that the poorest in society are often excluded from art, and especially the technologies used to create media art, and it was in tackling social exclusion that the organisation most clearly aligned with national government agendas.

The early work of Merseyside Moviola was reactive to the political environment, with its first event being entitled *The Urban Programme*, a direct reference to, and parody of, the regeneration agenda of the Conservative government. However, within a few years,

Moviola had become recognised by government funding bodies as an organisation deserving of major investment, and by being in receipt of significant levels of public funding, the organisation became more entwined with government policies such as New Labour's social inclusion agenda. The first evidence of Moviola's willingness to work with funding bodies to maximise its budgets was shown in 1992 by the Film, Video and Broadcasting (FVB) department of the ACGB inviting Moviola to bid for capital funding in response to the *Very Spaghetti* (1991) report which highlighted the inadequacies of including interactive media within the gallery system.[804]   As discussed in Section 2.3.2, Moviola developed the MITES project following the ACGB's approach, and whilst it has been restructured in the new FACT business plan, MITES made an important contribution to media art, both in Liverpool and across Britain.

Video Positive and MITES demonstrate that FACT's ambitions went beyond the confines of Liverpool, but it was in response to Video Positive's international gaze that the organisation developed the Collaboration Programme. The Collaboration Programme has been heavily reliant on public funding, and the pursuit of financial support has led to FACT aiming to meet criteria laid out by funding bodies. The completion of funding applications requires the inclusion of certain keywords to locate the proposed project within a contemporary discourse of, in this case, community arts, but as we have seen throughout this thesis, problems exist in the definition of the terminology. Terms such as 'engagement,' 'participation,' 'impact' and 'legacy' are widely employed, yet do very little to evaluate the role that arts and culture can play in peoples' lives. Nonetheless, FACT has used this terminology to define its community arts programme; thus the Collaboration Programme has been entitled, at various times, 'Collaboration and Engagement,' 'Participation,' and, currently, 'Engagement and Learning.' This reflects the organisation's increasing entwinement with funding bodies which are either direct branches of government, or controlled at arm's length.

The close relationship between FACT and its funders raises questions about independence from government agendas, and it is further demonstrated by the close alignment of the

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[804] Francis et al 1992

FACT brand with New Labour's political approach. Furthermore, the government's agenda of using culture to tackle social exclusion became integrated into FACT's own agenda, the importance of which is shown by the survival of the Collaboration Programme in contrast to Video Positive. However, the assessment framework that exists for community projects would suggest that there is a fundamental difference between the government's attempts to tackle social exclusion and those of arts practitioners. *tenantspin*, examined in Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, provides a solid example of this, and whilst it tallies with contemporary political agendas of social inclusion by working with elderly communities in Liverpool, FACT has allowed the project to pursue its own agenda. However, *tenantspin*'s former project manager, Alan Dunn, questioned whether the project could have been more overtly political in the issues it tackled,[805] which would suggest that the project's reliance on public funding restricted its freedom to ask challenging questions, and *tenantspin*'s recent statement that it feels pressure to apply its programme, which works because of the intimacy of the processes of engagement it involves, to as many people as possible, reflects the focus of funders on quantity rather than quality.[806]

Research Question 5

What relationship is there between the development of FACT and changing arts practice and policy in Britain?

Regardless of FACT's alignment with funding bodies, four aspects of its programme – Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme, MITES and the FACT Centre – have played a significant role in shaping media art practice and presentation in Britain. Moviola's early exhibition programme, Video Positive, was launched as a festival which celebrated an emerging set of art practices and it established Liverpool as the national centre of video art. Although it no longer exists, Video Positive created an environment in Liverpool which saw contemporary art celebrated in large scale city-wide events, and as asserted in Section 2.1.5, it can be understood as the precursor to festivals such as the Liverpool Biennial and, on a national level, the AV Festival in the North East. Video Positive also promoted the idea of using the city as a canvas, and this was facilitated by FACT collaborating with Liverpool's main cultural institutions, thus establishing a cultural network across the city. This

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[805] Dunn, interviewed by the author, 20 August 2010
[806] tenantspin (2012), *History* (Online)

approach, and the use of public spaces to display art, widened audiences, which had a ripple effect around the country, although it was through the Collaboration Programme that Video Positive's legacy is most notable.

The Collaboration Programme, which asserted the importance of nurturing audiences, and the treatment of community art as equal to Video Positive's mainstream arts programme, was a revolutionary approach, and it demonstrated how community art programmes led by art institutions can be applied beyond the walls of the gallery. However, by constantly pursuing an agenda that is fast paced and ever increasing in size, FACT has struggled to find the time and resources to reflect on the important work that it has done throughout its history and, as outlined in Section 2.2.4, the *tenantspin* project reveals the inability of the organisation to answer the many questions that its work has posed. Nevertheless, the Collaboration Programme helped to establish the festival model as a place to celebrate artworks from varied authors, and its place in the public spaces across Liverpool was essential to changing the way that art is both made and consumed.

Whilst the impact of Video Positive and the Collaboration Programme was largely local, the consumption of media art across Britain was widely altered by the work done by MITES. As was seen in Sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4, MITES operation as a near-monopoly demonstrates how important and influential the service was, and the wide integration of media technologies in galleries, coinciding with decreasing costs, can be attributed to MITES' vision. MITES' development of a store of technology that was cutting edge, required skilled operators, and could be loaned nationwide, enabled art organisations to include media artworks within their exhibitions without having to invest in expensive and specialist equipment. MITES made media art a viable option for galleries of all sizes, and having worked with small art organisations as well as Britain's leading art institutions, the ramifications of the service were widespread.

However, MITES has not succeeded in refining the presentational spaces of media art, with the FACT Centre clearly demonstrating the shortcomings of the existing black box gallery

format. As discussed in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, the FACT Centre aimed to redefine the media centre model, but it has failed to address the difficulties of black box galleries. The problems of attracting audiences into spaces of the unknown remains unresolved across Britain's media centres, but the increasing amount of media technologies that has infiltrated museums and galleries would suggest that almost all cultural institutions are becoming a form of media centre. Furthermore, the FACT Centre continues to be divided by FACT's lack of control over the various services within it following the ACE's stipulations that an external cinema provider must operate the film programme. In comparison, for example, to Dundee Contemporary Art (DCA) which opened in 1999 and seems to have had greater success in integrating their arts and cinema audiences, it can be asserted that FACT's contribution to refining the media centre model appears to be quite limited.

Of course, none of these influences on media and community art practice, policy and audiences can be understood in isolation from a range of other factors, including the ubiquity of technology in Western society and the related increase in the use of technology in art production. However, it is important to note that early media art practice and production was primarily developed in the USA, Japan and parts of Europe, with Britain somewhat lagging behind. Consequently, raising the profile of media art required the commitment of a dedicated art organisation to mediate its development. For media art practice and its audiences in Britain, FACT's sub-brands have played an important role in promoting artists through Video Positive and its current exhibition programme, improving collaborative and community art practice through the Collaboration Programme, and bringing these practices to a wider audience through MITES.

Whether FACT has succeeded in impacting arts policy is less easy to assess, but as was shown in Section 2.3.2, MITES' close work with the FVB department would suggest that the organisation was influential within the ACGB. Furthermore, the Collaboration Programme tackled important issues, such as the digital divide, long before national government and, as we saw in Section 2.2.4, the government's *Digital Britain* (2009)[807] report would suggest

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[807] See DCMS and BIS 2009

that the actions of art institutions can raise the profile of key issues in contemporary society enough to push them onto the political agenda.

Reasons for the Rise of FACT

FACT's rise, from the initial concept of promoting video art developed by two students, to an art institution of international renown, over a twenty-five year period, is remarkable. Furthermore, establishing itself as an integral component of Liverpool's cultural identity was also an achievement, particularly because, at the time of foundation, the cultural profile of the city was already both acclaimed and diverse. Its rise can be attributed to a number of different factors, which are rooted in the political, socio-economic and cultural context of Britain and, therefore, whilst Vendenabeele claims that art is a window onto other communities,[808] this thesis suggests that FACT is a window onto wider society. This is because of the role that FACT has played in the processes of change that have taken place during the twenty-five years covered by this study, and these changes have manifested themselves in a period of considerable growth for the organisation.

There are three main reasons for FACT's growth. First, by promoting media art, the organisation has worked with a niche product, and it has done so whilst its components, including technological innovation and participatory arts practice, were on an upward trajectory. Media technology has transformed contemporary society, although when Merseyside Moviola was established in 1985, the scale of this transformation could not have been anticipated. Through its sub-brands, Video Positive, the Collaboration Programme and MITES, FACT has promoted the idea of art and culture as a catalyst for change, and it has supported media art practice and production as a part of culture for a more sustained period of time than other media art organisations in Britain. In this context, the organisation's longevity can be attributed to the quality of the work it has produced, and its position within the vibrant cultural context of Liverpool.

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[808] Vendenabeele (2004), "'New' Media, Art and Intercultural Communication," p.1

Second, and in connection to its position in Liverpool, FACT was in the right place at the right time. Despite being established in a city with intense socio-economic problems, Merseyside Moviola launched at the cusp of increased investment, particularly in cultural and regeneration projects, and the organisation has benefited from a period of growth in Liverpool. FACT's success at gaining funding can be attributed to its strong relationship with the FVB department at the ACGB, which was smaller than other departments, but also had a much smaller pool of organisations to support. Securing RFO status in 1995 was a turning point for FACT as it enabled them to establish a long-term strategy for shaping the organisation's future and, two years later, this was reaffirmed by the rebranding of the organisation. The FACT brand aligned with the new government, and presented an organisation with a cutting edge and modern image that was attractive to a range of funders. This process signalled the start of the FACT Centre project, the opening of which coincided with the announcement of the successful bid for ECoC status in 2008. ECoC led to increased economic investment in Liverpool, and FACT's openness to the use of culture within regeneration aided its development during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Third, the process of institutionalisation had a significant impact on FACT, and has aided the perception of continued growth despite the financial uncertainty that the FACT Centre caused. The FACT Centre redefined the organisation's structure, which came at the cost of some of FACT's most successful projects, and it also revealed FACT's over-reliance on the individual personalities that drove its agenda. Whilst these personalities, alongside the opening of the FACT Centre, cemented the organisation's role in both Liverpool and Britain's cultural offer, changes to senior staff and fluctuations in core funding have shown how vulnerable the organisation remains. Furthermore, the FACT Centre has placed a financial burden on the organisation which continues to affect its day-to-day planning and delivery, although after a period of transition which jeopardised the organisation's role, the release of the new business plan in 2010 would suggest that its future development will be more considered than its previous *ad hoc* approach.

Concluding Reflections

Having studied the establishment and development of FACT in detail, it is important to ask how a study of this nature can affect future research, funding agendas, and the practice, production and display of media art. This thesis has raised as many questions as it has answered, and having demonstrated the importance of reflecting on past decisions in order to evaluate performance and to build stronger future programmes, it is now necessary to consider the wider implications of the findings of the research. Through the study of art institutions and their role in society alongside the inclusion of media technologies in art practice, the media centre model has been interrogated and this thesis asserts that this relatively new type of cultural institution represents a continuing process of evolution that has taken place in museums and galleries since the nineteenth century. However, the inclusion of media within gallery spaces has become increasingly commonplace across all types of museum, and whilst the FACT Centre was intended to improve the media centre model that had emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s, this research has shown that both the concept for the building and the black box gallery format within it, has not progressed media centres beyond those which already existed. Instead, the MITES project, which has placed media technologies in many museums and galleries, can be seen as having rendered the media centre concept all but obsolete.

Whilst this claim is not intended to prophesise the demise of media centres, the inclusion of media in museums and galleries represents the scale of change that has taken place within media technology, and just as there has been a complete transformation of the way that people interact with others as a consequence of media, there has been a similar transformation in the way that art is both produced and consumed. During the twenty-five year period studied in this thesis, media art has transformed from a peripheral activity that was on the cusp of being included in art education, to a common component of art practice, production and display. With FACT used as the lens through which to view this period of development, we have seen that media art has become part of the traditional art institutional framework, from its initial display in festival programmes such as Video Positive to its inclusion in gallery spaces, and whilst there has been a notable shift away from many of the processes used when FACT was established, such as video and film, many more different methods of production have been employed by artists, ranging from

computer technology and performance to sensory applications and digital equipment. This has led to the inclusion of media art within the academic interrogation of art history, and whilst this has only recently been accepted, some types of media art have become so typical of contemporary art that they have become somewhat unremarkable within it.

The academic study of media art has exacerbated a problem that has existed throughout its history, however, and the apparent preoccupation with creating the label of *media art* to encapsulate a wide range of practices, risks oversimplifying the many and varied types of art production. As such, a performance artwork that is first created in a public space but captured on film and replayed in a gallery, may be defined as a moving image artwork, and is, therefore, imbued with the long histories of photography and cinema. Furthermore, when shown in a museum context, and studied thus, the original artwork becomes isolated from its initial context. Consequently, defining artworks of this nature as part of a 'catch-all' label frames them in a different set of debates, and continued attempts to place media art within the gallery, despite its often inherent unsuitability, compromises the quality and potential impact of the work. The unsuitability of media art to the gallery has led to the continued reliance on the festival format for the display of media artworks, and this serves to further isolate it from the mainstream of art. However, the study of FACT has shown that this isolation from mainstream art can be beneficial to media art practices, although this requires distance from the predominating view that art relies upon institutions to be validated.

Although now part of an art institution, the Collaboration Programme has identified a need to utilise the skills of those working within media art, and particularly within media centres, to tackle ongoing issues of access and to overturn entrenched gallery behaviours. Media art has a democratising potential, both in the subjects it tackles and in its fundamental relevance, through media, to everyday interactions, and with projects such as the Collaboration Programme, FACT has demonstrated best practice in the use of alternative methods of communication and interaction to improve access to the arts. However, the *tenantspin* project in particular emphasises the problem of isolating artworks from their context, and the two shows in recent years that have attempted to position *tenantspin* as

an 'exhibit' have highlighted a broader dilemma in arts practice; that of how galleries can provide the complex context to which an artwork is intrinsically linked. Just as FACT has been shown to be the product of a much broader sequence of political, economic and cultural factors, each artwork should be understood as similarly influenced by its external context, and the process of institutionalising the output of community or media art projects, where the making of art is more important than that which is made, has yet to be adequately dealt with by both practitioners and academics. Consequently, whilst FACT's Collaboration Programme is a leading example of working with disparate communities, by taking the processes of art making to them rather than attempting to entice people into museums, FACT's recent preoccupation with its own premises has failed to address the idea that this system works best when it does not try to place itself within the gallery.

As such, the findings of this research provide an opportunity to review the concept of the media centre. As we have seen with FACT, the pace of change within technology continues to be problematic, but as other museums and galleries begin to integrate more technology into their everyday operations, media centres must continue to differentiate themselves by becoming leaders of participation and engagement in arts and cultural activities. Media centres can have a strong local impact by targeting members of their surrounding communities, and whilst FACT has excelled at this through many innovative arts projects throughout its history, it is its international ambitions, signalled by the use of the FACT Centre as part of the organisation's core identity, that its potential impact is threatened. The international and, to an extent, national reach of media centres rests in an online presence and connections with artists and media centres around the world, but a more powerful model may reside in their role as a central hub with many branches, both physical and virtual, that reach into the surrounding communities. With media centres now having their own thirty year history, we are in a position to assess their activities to date, but to improve the existing, widely adopted, model there must be collaboration between artists, curators, architects and audiences to develop a less institutionalised, and more flexible, structure. This can build upon the art agency approach that characterised Moviola, and develop the concept of museums and galleries to better suit the nature of contemporary networked society.

Community arts practitioners have demonstrated a better understanding of this model of arts practice and production, and media artists and commentators can further learn from their reluctance to label the processes they use as *art*. The study of media art, and its recent development into a component of mainstream art practice, perpetuates the notion of high and low art, and in order to move away from these subjectivities and pretentions, it is necessary to reassess the criteria for measuring the benefits of involvement in the culture. There is an apparent consensus within arts and culture that involvement can have long-term benefits for participants, but the terminology that is used by practitioners, scholars and funders has yet to be adequately defined. As such, funding bodies require art organisations to demonstrate that they are facilitating sophisticated *engagement* with their audiences and participants, but with funding typically being short-term, there is no infrastructure to support the process of finding out how people do so, if at all, and whether this then has any impact on their everyday lives, thought processes or sense of wellbeing. Funding applications have led to the language of engagement and inclusion becoming engrained within the arts, with its use often being tokenistic, but the terminology is based upon the assumption that it is used for the same purpose and coherently defined without any evidence that this is the case.

Furthermore, whilst one of the most notable advantages in media and community arts practice is their power to respond to the very specific and ever-changing conditions of the communities from which they have emerged, there is yet to be an adequate framework for ascertaining the role that art organisations can play within these communities. At present, and as shown by the analysis of culture within regeneration policy, the integration of culture into other policy areas has led to its successes being measured against criteria that does not necessarily relate to its primary purpose. Consequently, as shown by the *Creating an Impact* (2010) report, and the assessment of the European Capital of Culture provided by Impacts 08, the artistic programme for Liverpool 2008 was measured against its ability to reinvigorate the economy of the area, with only brief reference to the notion of well-being, although again this was largely tested against improved living conditions. Whilst it could be argued that this is the means by which people experience improvement in their everyday lives, the continued lack of measures that support the idea that culture has value, both in and of itself, marginalises the benefits of the arts. Culture has an intrinsic, often

unquantifiable, value but this should not overshadow the fact that it can be a positive force for change, a powerful outlet, and a mode of expression for all levels of society, and it is these benefits that should far outweigh debates on whether an artwork is of high quality or can improve the economic potential of an area.

These criticisms provide an opportunity to re-examine how arts and cultural activities are implemented, analysed and assessed, and for this to be effectively introduced, there needs to be agreement across the many component parts of cultural provision. Just as the city is understood as inherently flexible and subject to ongoing processes of change, culture needs to be seen in the same manner, with media being a means of changing methods of art production and diversifying access to the processes of art. Similarly, the concept of what art is requires a more flexible definition, but the only way in which this can be achieved is for the better interrogation of the terminology that is used to define why art has value. This can be achieved by defining terms such as 'engagement,' 'value' and 'impact,' which have been widely used in this thesis due to their prominence within the literature and sources studied, and it is essential that we move away from a funding system that promotes inappropriate criteria for measuring value.

The key to this, both for FACT and across arts practice more broadly, is a re-emphasis on the audience, and a greater interrogation of the purpose of having an identity that is recognisable locally, nationally and internationally. For FACT, the FACT Centre and brand has become an integral part of the national and international identity of the organisation, but FACT's evaluation of this would appear to rely upon assessing its position within the broader hierarchy of arts organisations. This is measured by its ongoing ability to attract funding from various funding bodies, and this prioritisation of funders places them as one of an art institution's key audiences. This approach by art organisations endangers their integrity and independence, and with a national government that is currently making severe cuts to arts provision, it will be the true, often disenfranchised, audiences that will be most significantly affected.

To achieve a better understanding of cultural value, funders must invest in longitudinal studies of the arts, and this thesis has shown that wide-ranging analysis can be achieved, to an extent, by examining a single organisation, specific projects, and the broader concept of culture-led regeneration within the context of the city. However, further interrogation is required for the role of media in museums, the future of media art, and the potential of media centres to operate as hubs for engagement, encircled by many peripheral activities both across a physical area, in cyberspace, and in short-term projects, to be fully understood. Across arts and cultural practice, this requires greater interrogation of the terminology, a better understanding of audiences and freedom from political agendas within the funding structure, and in the case of FACT, the tenth anniversary of the opening of the FACT Centre in 2013 is an appropriate time to address the way in which the building has become part of the broader cultural complexion within which it exists.

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