
'The post cultural city?'

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Yona Friedman believed that architecture's task was to provide citizens a framework, a structure to implement their own ideas. Like Constant, New Babylon, Friedman regarded the rise of the automation of industrial labour and the rise of recreation as a decisive social change that would render traditional urban structures obsolete. An immobile and elaborate conventional architecture was to be replaced by flexible and mobile structures.

While many architecture monologues attempt to promote new sets of rules or systems by which we (architects) ultimately want the user (non-architects) to unwittingly follow, Friedman insists that we should rather lay a framework within which the inhabitants can structure their surroundings.

In recent years, this is fast becoming a reality, the rise of innovative technology and dynamic new working models, now allow us to explore the possibility of architecture as a truly transformative experience.

The past decade has seen the transformation of many of our post industrial cities through crude regeneration programs, that have done little but create an unrealistic image of the city. Based heavily on cultural consumption models of regeneration, "Landmark" buildings and self-proclaiming "icons" 3d logos, city slogans 'urban living', synthetic-modern towers, bars, shopping centres and sport stadiums where to be the saviour of our cities. The cities become a 'brand' based on a superficial image of its-self.

The culture that once made a city unique has been eroded by the regeneration process replacing it with 'empty functionality', the function of the useless space.

This de-radicalization is leading are cities in to cultural meltdown. The city is becoming a void for the consumption of mass produced products.

This process is ineffective and slow to respond to the social, technological and economical changes that are occurring across the world, leaving are cities in a vulnerable position.

Citizens have become content providers, they negotiate what's presented, designers now need to create frameworks, rather than relying on the magical strokes of their pens!

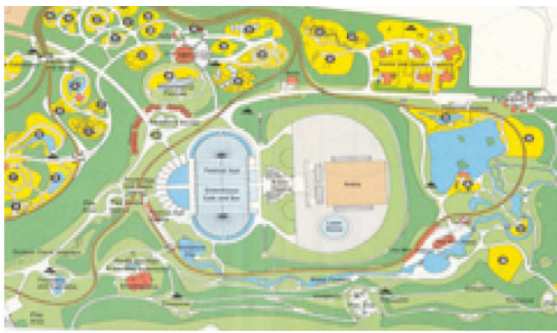
How can we alter the crude cultural-led regeneration strategies and techniques of the last century? How can we begin to solve the problems of de-radicalization and Gentrification of regenerated cities? Will the post cultural city be a place of hyper-production or hyper-consumption, or perhaps there is a way of combining the two?

Regeneration



Peter Cook (Archigram)
["Instant City in a Field Long Elevation 1/200", 1969]

Archigram's 'Instant City', 'a mobile technological event that drifts into underdeveloped, run down towns or cities via air balloons with provisional structures and performance spaces. The effect is a deliberate over-stimulation to produce mass culture, with an embrace of advertising aestheticsⁱ. The whole endeavour is intended to eventually regenerate an area, and then move on leaving behind advantageous 'advanced technology hook-ups'. This type of rolling carnival idea, of out-side intervention helping to revitalize a town or city.



Can be seen with the proposed regeneration benefits associated with the prestigious 'Capital of Culture' title award to Liverpool.

In 1981 Lord Michael Heseltine first announced that Liverpool's dock land was to be the scene of "the finest urban industrial housing and recreation project in the country." - the Liverpool Garden Festival.

"The decades of decay are over" Heseltine cried, as this new development was meant to indicate a new chapter in Liverpool's history. A barren, deserted city was to be revitalized as the champion of the north again, 'Heseltine's plan was to hold a festival on 600 acres of polluted land on the banks of the Mersey. Following large-scale decontamination and a festival encouraging civic pride, the area would be regenerated, with housing and industry attracted to the area'.

The Garden Festival scheme, which attracted 3 million visitors in 1984, was initially successful but two decades on, the garden festival site remains abandoned – numerous proposed schemes have failed to materialize, 'due to planning problems or poor business management'ⁱⁱ. The site was recently nominated for UK's 'most wasted spaces' in a competition held by CABE, and unemployment is still above the national average. The regeneration process which was described by Heseltine as a 'revolution', failed to regenerate the area, having little if any long-term benefits.

ⁱ <http://metadata.cetis.ac.uk/members/scott/blogview?entry=20080105183202> – Scott Wilson

ⁱⁱ Taking the Michael, 2003 issue 46, By Mark Leftly - <http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=1032102>