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Deindustrialisation, Culture and Education Strategies: A Case-Study of Tate Liverpool's Youth-Programme

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Abstract: At the beginning of the 21st century post-industrial cities, such as Liverpool, were applying art-led models of urban regeneration in the hope of initiating a transition to a knowledge-based society (Harvey 1989; 2001). This process, as one can imagine, has faced strong opposition and resistance from various quarters. This paper discusses the role that an educational strategy plays in the placement of a contemporary art gallery in a post-industrial city. Focusing on the Tate Liverpool's youth programme, the Young Tate, the strategies required to firmly establish a Tate Gallery in Liverpool are considered, as well as how these strategies should recognise and incorporate the city's specific social and economic challenges. This discussion is based on the preliminary results of an ongoing ethnographic research project focused on European cultural policies and educational dynamics. The ethnographic study covers three educational departments of contemporary art galleries located in several European Capitals of Culture – the Tate Gallery in Liverpool (2008), the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius (2009) and the Fundação de Serralves in Porto (2001). Based on a comprehensive and critical perspective, we analyse how common European policies are translated into different non-school educational proposals by those galleries. Taking into account the specific social, political and economic contexts of each city, the different educational assumptions, models and concepts of each cultural institution are analysed.

Keywords: Art-led Urban Regeneration, Art Education, Non-formal Education, Peer-leadership

THE *Tate in the North*, as Tate Liverpool became known, opened its doors in 1988, at the Albert Dock. The building that was conceived in 1848 to be a dock warehouse, due to the capitalism crises and transformations became the home, in the north, of the National Collection of Modern Art.

To be clearer, at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, cities are facing economic transition, services expansion, technological innovation and cultural diversity. Decades earlier, Mandel (1975) labelled the mingling of such trends as symptomatic of a *late capitalism* as transnational corporations proliferated, a new International Labour Organisation came into being, flows of information and financial transactions accelerated as a result of the digital age, while production moved to developing countries and the entire industrial economy, typified by developments in the United Kingdom (UK), became heavily dependent on the services sector. As Fordism collapsed, the subsequent deindustrialisation process brought mass unemployment and the need to find new strategies to underpin the sustainability of the cities. Adjustment policies and funding have been directed towards art-led regeneration models based on the assumption that it is possible to convert symbolic capital into economic capital, thus encouraging cities to invest in image, heritage and culture, as well as in the training of a critical, creative mass. This belief supports the idea that an

‘arty’ city has the potential to overcome a heavy industrial legacy through the use of culture in order to develop new products, new images, new organisational structures and, ultimately, new and highly competitive economic specialisations (Florida, 2002).

However urban rehabilitation through culture is usually synonymous with gentrification (Arantes, 2000). Beyond city regeneration there is an intention to ‘regenerate’ the local population or replace it with groups with highly skilled and intense connections to the opportunities that urban centres tend to provide, usually associated to a particular social segment, and have an elective affinity with the ethos of the ‘creative class’ and with the spirit of the neoliberal urban project (Florida, 2002). In order to build this ‘arty’ city, cultural institutions such as museums and galleries and cultural events, such as the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) have been increasingly accepted as a critical component and instruments which legitimise a strategy to enhance the attractiveness of the urban space, thus drawing national and international flows of investment and accelerating the current restructuring strategies of physical and economic growth and urban identity (Harvey, 1989; 2001).

Bearing this context in mind, this paper discusses the role of an educational strategy in the placement of a contemporary art gallery in a post-industrial city. Focusing on the Tate Liverpool’s youth programme, the Young Tate, we will seek to identify the strategies in place to enroot a Tate Gallery in the city and the strategies followed to recognise and incorporate the challenges in the shift to a *knowledge-based* economy and an ever more multicultural society.

On the ethnographic research¹ that this paper reports on we analyse the production of a political agenda for education in cultural contexts, developed in the first decade of the 21st century at the global, regional and national levels of policymaking (Cortese, *et al* 2001). This framework aims to determine how this agenda has been *translated* into educational strategies, programmes, disclosures and social-pedagogical practices in cultural institutions. This question emerges as highly relevant when interpreting and discussing the heterogeneity and complexity of the role of cultural institutions, as Stoer (2001) argues, in the construction of contemporary educational pathways. As contexts of observation, three contemporary art galleries were selected that are or were ECoC and occupy heterogenic geopolitical positions (Wallenstein, 1974) – the Tate Gallery in Liverpool, the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius and Fundação de Serralves in Porto².

Making use of ethnographic methods and techniques so as to better understand these educational contexts, a field diary is kept which serves to build a research memory (Atkinson, 2001). At the same time, interviews are conducted with staff from the educational departments of the three galleries, and the documents used to support their work analysed. Therefore, this paper is based on the research memory produced during the particular case study of the Tate Liverpool, including texts written by young people and interviews with the Learning Department team to explore the youth programme and also its role in conflict resolution between a modern art gallery and a working-class city, as Deborah McIntyre-Brown (2001: 108) goes on to note:

¹ Ph.D. thesis in Sociology of Education and Culture at the Faculty of Arts, University of Porto: *The European Inter/Multicultural Education In Question. Ethnography on European Cultural Policies and Education Practices in Three European Contemporary Art Galleries*.

² The fieldwork is still on progress and will take one and half years, divided into 3 periods of 6 months for each gallery.

‘The Tate’s opening exhibition included the Liverpool equivalent of Carl Andre’s pile of bricks - a piece titled *Bed* by Anthony Gormley, which consisted of 6,000 slices of white bread which, although waxed, went mouldy over the exhibition’s run, causing much fevered arts analysis, and many barbed Scouse jokes’.

The Placement of a Contemporary Art Gallery in a Post-Industrial City

Along with the Fordism collapsed, transnational political and economic organisations emerged, i.e., the European Union (EU). Funded through multilateral agreements, the EU allowed the creation of a common benchmark in the area of public social policies, i.e. the ECoC or the Culture 2007; which aim to manage the circumstances of production and reception of globalisation effects by the member-states (Featherstone, 1997).

Since Glasgow 1990, the ECoC event has served as an instrument of urban regeneration in post-industrial cities. Beatriz Garcia (2004) argues that the cultural approach, therefore, does not merely take the form of ephemeral cultural initiatives but has become the basis of a comprehensive cultural policy aimed at establishing a city’s own international identity thus enabling it to compete in a global economy. Garcia (2004) states that industrial cities embark on a sort of ‘aggressive redefinition of city identity and images’ in order to tackle urban decline and decay. As argued by David Harvey (1989), the focus of this ‘aggressive redefinition’ tends to fall on ‘mega-events’, such as the Olympics and the ECoC Programme. When Melina Mercuri³ created the ECoC event, it was her intention to underline the cultural diversity of European construction. However, cities soon deviate from this seminal idea, as well as the project’s key focus, as is evident on the European Union’s web site; ‘Over the past twenty years, the event has been very successful in terms of media response and the associated cultural and socioeconomic development of the cities concerned’ (AA.VV., 2007).

Quite apart from Liverpool’s hosting of the ECoC event in 2008, the city has been searching for a regeneration strategy since the 1970s. At the time, Liverpool’s docks and industries went into sharp decline. The advent of containerisation meant that the city’s docks became obsolete. Several plans were developed for the re-use of the buildings but none actually materialised. Consequently, in 1972, the dock was closed and became the symbol of the collapse of the local economy as a whole (Lorente, 2003). Having lain derelict for almost ten years, the redevelopment of the dock began in 1981, when the newly-elected Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher decided that the city was incapable of handling regeneration initiatives itself and, under the guidance of the Minister for Merseyside, set up the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) to take over the responsibility of regenerating and redeveloping Liverpool’s docks (Mcintyre-Brown, 2001).

At the same time, the Tate Gallery was facing problems with a lack of display and storage space at Millbank (London). The recently-appointed director, Alan Bowness, decided to open a new Tate Gallery to resolve the problem, and brought to light the idea of the *Tate of the North* in 1979. Alan Bowness searched for a building outside London that had lost its initial purpose and could be transformed into a gallery. Bowness visited several cities in the North of England and chose the Albert Dock as the place for the *Tate of the North* (McKain,

³ Melina Mercuri can be considered the “mother” of the European Capital of Culture. In 1994, Melina Mercuri, as the Greek Minister of Culture, presented a proposal to the European Council envisioning the creation of a year-long event that celebrated European cultural diversity.

2008). Even though Liverpool was Henry Tate's hometown, this does not seem to have been the main reason for the choice.

A high-profile public enquiry was already underway at the time for the Albert Dock. Private developers, Gerald Zisman Associates, planned to create a Dockland Trade Centre, which could ensure the creation of 5000 to 7000 new jobs. However, this proposal was dropped in favour of the Tate Gallery. Antoinette McKaine (2008) stresses the idea that the placement of the gallery at the Albert Dock was centrally imposed by the conservative Thatcher government on the local Labour Council. Richard Williams (2004: 127) also underline this idea,

'The processes by which the Tate Gallery was realised in Liverpool were certainly neo-colonial, involving the operation of governmental and quasi-governmental agencies over the local. Local government, as we saw, was suppressed and several of its functions taken up by the centre; at the most critical stage of the conflict between centre and periphery, in 1986, central government began to consider the possibility of direct rule of Merseyside, in an explicitly colonial sense'.

The placement of a *Tate of the North* (along with shops, offices and apartments) was an improvement of the urban regeneration strategy proposed by the MDC to use culture as an 'instrument' in the renewal of Liverpool's dock area. This revitalisation programme was not only an important factor in the move towards a *knowledge-based* society supported on creative industries, it was also a way to remove the docks' symbolic power associated with the problems of unemployment, slum living and working-class struggles that had long stigmatised the city. However, this regeneration strategy fell far short of the Liverpoolians' expectations (Lorente, 2003). Indeed, Liverpoolians were rather sceptical about the MDC's idea of investing government money to place a National Art Gallery in Liverpool and seemed to prefer the private investment scheme to build a shopping centre. In the early 1980s unemployment rates in Liverpool were among the highest in the UK and the Dockland Trade Centre was seen as an opportunity to help solve these problems (McKain, 2008). Thus seems that far from being only a political conflict between national and local governments, it also was a cultural and class conflict, as Barker (1999: 181) points out:

'Far from solving the problems of mass unemployment in a post industrial society, they generate comparatively few jobs, many of them low-paid and short-term (waitresses etc.). Indeed, this type of strategy can exacerbate social divisions by subsidizing the leisure pursuits of the middle classes, especially tourists, at the expense of spending on public services such as housing and education that would benefit the majority of social inhabitants'

The new gallery became the focus of public discussion and social and economic tension, although the gallery soon began to develop strategies to get closer to the local communities. The gallery was aware of the necessity to build an audience for modern and contemporary art, to be able to justify the creation of a Tate Gallery outside London, as the Tate Director stated, 'If the Tate comes to Liverpool we know that we have to find a new audience' (Bowness, 1981 in McKaine, 2008: 8). Despite the Tate's 'non-friendly' reception, the gallery soon began to develop strategies to get closer to the local communities, because was aware

of the necessary to build an audience for modern and contemporary art, to be able to justify the creation a Tate Gallery outside London, as the Tate Director stated, ‘If the Tate comes to Liverpool we know that we have to find a new audience’ (Bowness, 1981 in McKaine, 2008: 8). Although some critical voices pointed out that the educational programme that was set was part of the plan to ‘civilise’ the Liverpudlians. Richard Williams (2004) proclaim that the programme was a continuum of the neo-colonial attitude towards the city that apparently underpinned the decision to build the gallery. Although seems to be another version of the story, as the Head of the Learning Department told us in one of the interviews:

But is quite good that is in Liverpool, because Henry Tate came from Liverpool, made his fortune or started to made his fortune here[...] So, for all sort of reason is good that is in Liverpool, but on a very pragmatic basis was a political move. But if you can imagine 1988 the dock is deselected [...] there was a “no go area” and quite a dangerous place. The city was in an economic melt down, decline... no jobs, you know?! ... no money. When I came here in 1999 there were no traffic jams!!! If you could imagine what people must have thought! The Govern spending money putting a National Art Gallery... when we have no home, have no jobs, in deep poverty, you know?! It was other brave or a very very stupid decision. But, actually, 20 years on it was a good thing to do, because with other cultural organizations kick started... the kind of regeneration, or was part of it [...] was part of the city trying to... welcome European money in order to start to build a stronger infrastructure in the city. (Head of Learning)

Thus the Tate Liverpool and the Learning Department were born in this context of social tensions and economic transition from an *industrial-based* to a *knowledge-based* economy, more focused on the tertiary sector. Such a transition was far from being smooth. Hence its educational strategies were directed at overcoming resistance and this is most probably what makes the Tate Liverpool’s Learning Department an interesting case-study, as Toby Jackson (2009), one of Learning Department’s founders, registers:

‘Tate was in a middle of debates around institutional racism. Debate around the relation of Tate Gallery with the slave trade, it was a hostile environment. Tate was aware of the popular prejudice towards modern art due to their life experience. But Liverpool was a place that anything was possible. The exploring side was possible in Liverpool not in London. It’s a matter of visibility. Local innovation, small steps to get the confidence, little pockets of innovation to show the direction to the organization. This affects all organization *ethos*’.

Are Non-School Educational Contexts a Response to the Challenges of 21st Century Education?

Over the last two centuries, schooling was considered the main forum of education and played a seminal role in workers’ training for an industrial labour market. The social contract between the (western) states and industrial capitalism ensured the right of access to (school) education for all citizens through secular, compulsory and free systems of education. However, the precarious social situation and the requirements of the existing development models, urge the need to find new educational answers. The effects of structural social change asso-

ciated with the phenomenon of globalisation, lead us to question the school's ability to create motivating and rewarding learning environments (Stoer, 2001).

However, this concern is not new. The importance of non-school educational contexts goes back to the *World Conference on the Crisis of Education* (1967) organised by UNESCO, where *non-formal education* (Rogers, 2004) and the ideology of *human capital* (Teodoro, 2001) had become popular as a response to fast-changing economic and political times. The apparent overlap between the mandate of educational policies and the new needs of the capitalist system gained renewed relevance in the context of the *Lisbon Strategy*. This document states the central role of *lifelong learning* in the creation of a *knowledge-based society*, while once more questioning the genuine contribution of formal education to developing the skills and expertise required by the labour market. The recognition of the schooling limitations and constraints seems to be increasingly confronted with programmes of *non-formal education* – free of the formality of the traditional system of education, as the European Committee on Culture and Education subscribe: 'formal education systems alone cannot respond to the challenges of modern society and therefore welcomes its reinforcement by non-formal education practices' (Dumitrescu, 1999). Erica McWilliam and Sandra Haukka (2008: 664) state that contemporary learning takes place in an increasingly unpredictable and 'irregular social world', as the labour 'is shaped by complex patterns of anticipations'. Together with Richard Florida and Jim Goodnight these authors stress the idea that skills such as *creativity, flexibility, adaptability* and *competitiveness* are powerful economic drivers, not just in the field of the arts: 'A company's most important asset [...] It's creative capital—simply put, an arsenal of creative thinkers whose ideas can be turned into valuable products and services' (McWilliam & Haukka, 2008: 656). Therefore, the same authors sustain that young people are now more likely to need 'one good qualification plus edgy know-how'. These assumptions emphasize the progressively centrality that non-school contexts have been appearing as 'partners' in contemporary learning process. Museums and galleries, as less-structured learning environments, are examples of this movement.

Young Tate – a Non-Formal Education Proposal

From the end of the 1980s, Tate Liverpool started to develop its education programme based on the Tate Britain model. Although the specific characteristics of the city encouraged the education team to go further and to create an *Education and Outreach Programme* and the post of *Information Assistants* (IAs). As Toby Jackson (2000: 24) explains this post became one of the distinctive marks of Tate Liverpool – the gallery was 'the first major museum in the UK to adopt this practice'. IAs were selected among ex-dock workers and recent graduates, young and old, male and female to be more than gallery invigilators and to be able to talk authoritatively with the audience about the works on display.

The *Education and Outreach Programme* was a way to reach the local communities, though the creation of a network throughout the region. An *Art Van* has visited festivals, town centres, schools and youth organisations to 'spread the word' about the *Tate of the North*. However, in the perspective of the former education curator Naomi Horlock (2000), the *Art Van* eventually proved to be insufficient, as it was unable to facilitate meaningful relations with the gallery. So the education team was pushed to take another step forward and created a Youth Programme, called *Young Tate*. Established by Toby Jackson and Naomi

Horlock in 1994, Young Tate is now the umbrella name for the Youth Programme across all four gallery sites, as well as their online space. Why is this programme so relevant?

The *Young Tate* was based on Moving Culture's (1990) recommendations. Coordinated by Paul Willis, this report concludes that: 'Many young people continue to leave school with neither the confidence nor the enthusiasm to visit galleries' (Richey, 2000: 11). So *Young Tate* is developed as a peer-led approach trying to promote real 'ownership' of the gallery by young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who had dropped out of school or were at risk of dropping out of school⁴. *Testing the Water: Young people and galleries*, a collection of essays, organised by Naomi Horlock, David Anderson, and Toby Jackson (2000), reports on the first years of this programme and the relationships between the gallery and their young audiences. As also described what the Head of Education called, in one of our interviews to 'win hearts and minds':

The gallery has to recognize its locality, recognize how people may feel about such a gallery in such a place and we needed to win hearts and minds by getting out there in the community. So the first education offices were schools... someone going out in a van, taking artists out, doing workshops in the community. (Head of Learning)

It was an educational strategy, through a youth programme, to break down the initial resistance of the city towards the gallery. As the Head of Learning stresses targeting young people was a workable strategy because they are usually more open to accepting new ideas and more familiar with a cultivated culture though school and therefore probably less resistant towards the gallery. If *Young Tate* initially came to life as a strategy to establish a fruitful relationship with the city, it has today become more plastic, assuming different forms, and boasts an increasingly vocational configuration with a strong and conscious investment in skills that can easily be transferred to the labour market. The programme has been adapted to the emerging patterns of learning and is aware of the changes in the school and family-environment, as well as the new challenges the city faces, mainly with regard to the shift to a more tertiary economy.

Data collected through a survey revealed that most of the *Young Taters* were White British⁵, whose parents have higher education and perform intellectual or high-level, socially-recognised professions. This made them a very socially homogeneous group that is already committed to visual culture (they voluntarily become involved in the programme)⁶. And above all, they all keep their academic pathways and are fully aware of the advantages that can be taken from their connection to Tate Liverpool in enhancing their lives and future professional careers, as one the *Young Taters* mentioned in one of our interviews:

I met L. E. who is one of the older members of Young Tate, she's actually working now. We were talking about it – 'oh what can I do – because it was my second year in Liverpool and I was trying to get involved as most as I can everywhere and I couldn't find something that kind of really fit me and teach me something. So she told me about Young Tate, and she told me about it because she was being, like, she basically started

⁴ As with unemployment, the school drop-out rate was also a major concern in Liverpool (Cressey & Jones, 1995).

⁵ "White British" was an ethnic-based classification used by the 2001 census in the UK.

⁶ There is an open day dedicated to recruitment in the spring. However, over the years, more young people have come to join the group, mostly by word-of-mouth effect.

to work with the Family Programmes and she said to me, well she learnt a lot through Young Tate and then got into[...] I think it's amazing because when you see people like L.E. or A. Or H., you know?! They just started as a Young Tater and now they are really confident and they know what they wanna do and the way they are going, and it's just amazing (Young Tater).

Peer-Leadership – Young Tate as a Programme Continually in Progress

As part of the research project underpinning this paper, a group of young people was under observation for seven months⁷. They introduce themselves on their *My Space* page as: 'Enthusiastic individuals who want to develop confidence, team working, project management and / or creative skills. No previous knowledge of art necessary, everyone welcome!' (Young Tate, 2008). No specific selection process was followed, having merely opted for participant observation of the *Young Tate* members meetings. These meetings aim at coming up with new ideas, developing existing projects, or serve evaluation purposes. Over the year, *Young Taters* plan a number of different public and private events for young audiences, including creative art workshops, fashion shows, galleries interchanges, mailing art or zin publications⁸. Besides these meetings a training course is provided once a year – *Young Tate Workshop Leaders* – in which young people have the chance to learn several workshop leadership techniques and tips to build their own interpretation of the collection and to facilitate the relationship between the gallery and other young people. These techniques became known, among gallery educators, as the *Tate Method*⁹, which provides young people a very valuable passport for entry into the cultural labour market, as the curator of the programme points out:

I think the vocational element to Young Tate is really strong about giving, not just art skills but also project management, making them aware of the world of work and all these soft skills that they need and really helps the group (Young Tate Curator).

These young people play an active role in the youth-programme development and production at every stage of each project, from design and rationale, artists' selection, budget allocation and spending, to printing and publicity, project management and evaluation. In this sense, peer-leadership has become the *ethos* of the programme's design, on which young people take on hands the course of the programme. They are also encouraged to work with other departments of the gallery, such as the Visitor Services, Communication and Exhibition teams, always under the supervision of the Young Tate curator, who works as a facilitator/moderator of these interactions. However, some people who work with the Young Tate programme consider that, in some cases, the idea of autonomy and ownership is taken too far:

I think it's very ambitious, not just in terms of what they produce but also in terms of their responsibilities and time commitment toward it. Which I don't think is a bad thing.

⁷ It is not possible to provide a precise number, as not all young taters participate regularly in the programme.

⁸ *Art Pad*, *Blake Reinvented*, *Youth Art Interchange* and *Dock 8*.

⁹ CHARMAN, Helen; ROSE, Katherine & WILSON, Gillian (Ed.) (2006). *The Art Gallery Handbook. A Resource for Teachers*. London: Tate Publishing.

I just think it does ask a lot from the young people that are involved. I very much like the idea... of being them taking the ownership of the project. Really... trying to get them to take as much ownership of the project as possible, trying to make them... take the decisions (Artist Educator).

Young Tate does take up a significant amount of young people's free time, although as McWilliam & Haukka (2008) highlight, their experience of work and play is being changed, these young people are immersed in a time and place which blends leisure and learning, thus promoting self-cultivation. Therefore they seem to be aware and in control of their learning agendas which include not only formal but also more informal and non-formal educational components. Although the idea that non-formal education projects, such as *Young Tate*, serve to boost self-esteem and help young people to reach their full potential raises some problems. First, there is the risk that the programme may collapse into a kind of 'affirmation therapy' or a 'Sunday Afternoon Club', and its main focus – interpretation of the collection by young people for young people – may fall behind. Second, if it does *ask a lot*, as one of the artist educators pointed out, the young people involved apparently want that *ask a lot* and demonstrate that they are motivated to develop new skills and are open to new experiences. As mentioned previously, this is a specific group which recognises the potential of this opportunity. The arrival of a new Curator that accumulates the youth and communities programmes reinforced the awareness that the *Young Taters* were a small group and the programme had the potential to embrace other field projects that already exist, with 'local' young people, in the words of the *Young Tate* Curator, *very hard for them to come on their own to join a group such as Young Tate*,

The emphasis of Young Tate was related to more openness, accessibility and diversity, so that it wasn't about one group of young people. That group would also have to open up to other young people specifically targeting people who have very little access to culture, which ranges from asylum seekers, to young carriers, young offenders, young people with disabilities. So, moving forward, the role of Tate Liverpool is to involve young people from those groups in what's happening at the gallery, in cultural activity (Young Tate Curator).

Young Tate took another shift, seeking to reach out to a more diverse audience and the usual small group of *Young Taters* were divided into more heterogenic teams (older young taters and new members) so as to ensure that 'new' *Young Taters* have enough space to feel comfortable to introduce their own ideas. This shift was a result of the peer-led strategy that allowed the *Young Tate* Curator, as she stated, to '*keep us on the toes and make sure that what we deliver is relevant to those people as well*'. At the same time, it represented a means by which *Young Taters* were able to reallocate their attention from their own individual performance to the possibility of learning through relationships with young people of multiple ethnic, national and social backgrounds, as one of the *Young Taters* testify:

When I came, I wasn't in the Young Tate, just in a Refugee Action. After I asked for M., she said that Young Tate is helping through art – 'anything you need'. I talked to M. and C. that I wanted some more refugee people to join. C. was very happy for that [...] I'm very happy, because for the first time it's a very different accent in Young Tate than

just English. Now I have some people that are like me – they can't speak English very well and it's cool for them

By providing them with an informal yet structured environment actively encourages the discussion of issues that concern young people, such as identity, gender, age, race, class or disability, as well as give them access to experiences they would probably not have had on their own.

At the same time, Young Tate are not confined to Liverpool, along with the ECoC event a project was created proposing that the gallery become more open to the European area. In the *Youth Art Interchange* project, Tate Liverpool hosts a weekend interchange with seven European galleries: Tate Britain, Modern and St. Ives; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art; Helsinki City Art Museum; Le Centre Pompidou and Museo Nacional Reina Sofia. For four months, the youth groups from these galleries mailed art works to each other in response to the theme of the Liverpool Biennial – *Made Up* – and tried to ‘promote active European citizenship [...] and help them to shape the European Union’s (EU) future’ (AA.VV, 2009). The project has been progressing rapidly and, in April 2010, the young groups will curate a touring exhibition, also assuming the responsibility for commissioning artists, interpretation and editing the catalogue.

The professionalisation of the gallery’s approach has become a stronger issue at Tate Liverpool which does not mean that the creativity and knowledge that young people have developed is reduced to vocationally saleable skills.

Final Considerations

Key social transformations in the path towards a *knowledge-based society* lie in paradigmatic economic transitions, which have a direct impact on education paradigms: new theories, new learning population profiles and, above all, new needs. All these transformations require the development of new skills, not only necessary to speed adjustment to the demands of late capitalism, but also essential to the construction of platforms of acknowledgement and dialogue that allow us to live together. Structured around models of non-formal education, with high symbolic and cultural capital, cultural institutions are regarded as vital partners in the development of a creative and critical mass in this phase of capitalism. Galleries definitely have the knowledge and the tools to build alternative educational pathways and help formal education system to meet contemporary educational challenges. Although in the same way as McWilliam and Haukka (2008: 658) denote we consider that is necessary to draw attention to the dangers that may arise from the submission of education to economic demands:

‘If Zygmunt Bauman (2004) is correct, [...] ‘learning may in the long run disempower as it empowers in the short’, and therefore, ‘[all] skills and know-how are as good as their last application’ (p. 22). Thus what counts today as workforce capability may have a very short shelf life: today’s capabilities may be tomorrow’s casualties’.

Along with education policies, urban and cultural strategies are demanded in order to enable cities to cope with the process of deindustrialization. The urban and cultural policies convergence allowed in one hand, the ‘museumification’ of the high symbolic value traditional centres, as Albert Dock; and in the other, the commodification of the cultural heritage, in

which the museum acquired an unprecedented leading role. Apparently this is the milieu for a ‘postmodern museum’, in which the cultural reception side is emphasis, although driven by economic counterparts of the audiences’ attraction.

Furthermore, the Albert Dock, which comprises the largest single collection of Grade I listed buildings anywhere in Britain, still symbolises the city’s economic and cultural ‘state-of-the-art’, although is not anymore a derelict dock symbolising a post-industrial city in transition, but the major tourist attraction of an European capital of culture, mainly because of its Tate Gallery.

Despite different views about the placement of a Tate Gallery in a post-industrial city, the work of the Learning Department through educational programmes such as *Young Tate* were crucial to balancing the process of the gallery’s enroot in the city and a ‘*strong social agenda*’ with the ambition for global recognise, on the same scale as its London ‘counterparts’,

It’s hard for Tate Liverpool to balance its local priorities and also make sure it maintains its international profile [...] and the educational team here really has a strong social agenda, real social action, wanting to improve ordinary people’s lives here in Liverpool and to break down exclusion and all these kind of things; and there are so many groups that are not using the gallery that we don’t have the budget or the time to reach. But at the same time we need to make, not forgetting that we need to show our works of art to people overseas and not become this bottom gallery in the corner, so this may be a difficulty that I’m trying to balance the time and priorities (Young Tate Curator)

Rooted in a particular context, Tate Liverpool developed a tradition of strong investment in education and experimentation, which gave the gallery a ‘status’ of *laboratory for educational*. Toby Jackson (2009) defend that *Young Tate* programme and the Learning Department in overall seem to incorporate the *ethos* of the institution – the awareness of the educational potential of connecting art works to the social and political framework in which they are produced,

‘I think I have been more interested in the place of the artist and the experience of the world. The experience of getting engaged with an artwork. I do as an artist in the studio. You are less interested in definition, you are more interested in playing with definitions. I’m interested in the process’.

The young people of this global city have on their doorstep an alternative education proposal which invites them to broaden their perspectives beyond regular schooling education. The education team seeks engagement whilst improving the knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts for an increasingly broader youth audience and sharing their work with other galleries across Europe. Access to the process by which artistic and curators ideas are developed seems to allow young people to achieve a deeper understanding of the galleries’ operation and the art world at a broader scale. Peer-leadership as the core of the programme is crucial to its continuous updating and permanent awareness of contemporary educational demands.

Young Tate allows us to understand the profound significance that the local context takes on definition of art education programmes. As also provide us the filed to analyse the merge of the global education agendas with the institutions’ *ethos*, with the educators’ personal

agendas and with young people's demands and interests, which together produce a composite and complex context of analysis, which this paper did to some extent attempt to portray.

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