I don't know
but I don't
think we'll
be able to
afford it..

London, 2017

Artists in Tech Cities

This report derives from research sponsored by The Cultural Capital Exchange and undertaken by ShinJoung Yeo and Toby Miller at The Institute for Media and Creative Industries at Loughborough London, and East London-based arts organisation SPACE between September and December 2016.

It represents a pilot exercise to review some of the salient issues facing East London as a consequence of the emergence of planned technology sectors in post-industrial areas characterized by large pre-existing numbers of artists, whose lives are being transformed by sudden increases in the cost of space and the appearance of finance capital and corporate organization in their daily lives. It is hoped that this work can develop further, along two tacks: first, to explore the nature of similar experiences in other places; and second, to engage with the technology and arts sectors of East London in greater depth.

The research reviewed existing scholarly, activist, policy, and press literature guided by collaboration between the research partners, supported by a round table of East London artists discussing their experiences of this rapid changing environment and local photography.

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SPACE is a leading visual arts organization providing creative workspace, advocacy, support and promoting innovation. Established by artists in 1968, SPACE runs 19 artist studio buildings across 7 London boroughs and Colchester, providing affordable creative workspace plus support programmes, such as exhibitions, artists residencies, bursaries and training opportunities, to enable artists to be sustainable. SPACE also delivers Learning projects for schools, young people and communities neighbouring SPACE studio sites, to promote engagement with creativity and the arts.

The Exchange: The National Academics and Creatives Exchange is a two year pilot project bringing together artists, creative SMEs and early career researchers to enrich the ecology between the creative industries and academia, supported by Arts Council England and HEFCE.

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Summary

Artists' enclaves: a compromised haven in post-industrial cities

The last few decades have seen a convergence of artists' communities and technology clusters in former light manufacturing and warehousing industrial districts in the Global North, reshaping urban landscapes in such cities as London, San Francisco, Berlin, New York, and Barcelona. A similar trend is evident in parts of the Global South as well: seemingly desolate inner-city industrial sites are colonized by artists in search of cheap rents and large studio spaces; then these enclaves are encroached upon by high-technology sectors. They need the real estate: whereas in 2007, just 8% of London office space was occupied by the technology sector by 2013, this number was over 33%. It now requires more office space than the financial sector,[1] and the trend continues.[2]

This convergence/clash of technology clusters and artists' communities has been much welcomed by policy makers in search of urban development strategy. Local authorities seek to transform their cities into 'creative cities' that feature new technologies and cultural production at their very core in a magic amalgam of hardware, software, education, and aesthetics.[3] This is seen as the very harbinger of rebirth: an alleviation of the crisis of post-industrial inner cities that promises prosperity for all

by valuing 'creativity' and generating a large quantity of new and well-paid employment opportunities and wealth in hitherto-deprived neighbourhoods.

Despite the premise and its promise, the convergence of technology clusters and artists' communities has offered little relief to artists struggling to survive and exercise aesthetic freedom and creativity; and concomitantly, the urban poor and working classes are being displaced from those areas, as hyper-gentrification takes hold and gathers speed. The expansion of technology sectors has negatively transformed arts neighbourhoods that once provided alternative spaces for social, cultural, and artistic experimentation.

As a consequence of our research, we have come to question the logic behind the promotion of 'creativity' and the convergence and emergence in terms of development and urban planning in the region where we live and work: Silicon Roundabout/Shoreditch and Here East in East London. These sites represent somewhat different development contexts, but both were stimulated by public policies associated with the 2012 London Olympics and the UK's 2010 east Technology City initiative—Britain's attempt to reorient its economic base further towards a digital economy and create a networked technology cluster running from Shoreditch to Stratford.

Shoreditch, artists' enclave

The UK government made Shoreditch and surrounding neighborhoods—a thriving artists' enclave built on obsolete industrial infrastructures—its Technology City flagship. This exploited the area's art-and-culture scene and branded artists' life styles in order to forge a destination for cultural consumption and investment and entice multinational firms and elite labor. Shoreditch is now being occupied by technology firms, luxury corporate residences, coffee shops, bars, private galleries, and restaurants to serve the influx of young technology professionals. There has also been a dramatic growth of co-working spaces, because the technology sector relies so much on self-employed entrepreneurs, freelancers, and contract workers.

If there is a commonality between artists and technology workers, it is that they are part of an increasingly precarious casualised workforce living under the sign of 'creativity.' The expanded technology industry was supposed to be good news for artists struggling to survive, since the technology sector places 'creativity' at the center of its ethos. However, Shoreditch now embodies the gentrification that has radically accelerated and pushed existing artists and art spaces further out of town. Most artists have few means of sustainable financial support and no provision for, or protection of, their workspaces. A third of British artists earn only £10,000 a year, which amounts to 66% of a living wage.[4] They constitute part of a growing 'flexible' labor force in the UK with no job security, company pensions, or other benefits.

Here East: reengineering the Olympic Park and surrounding areas

Here East is a brand new, artificially-designed technology cluster, built as part of the Olympics-led regeneration project. It has enlisted the nearby artists' neighborhood of Hackney Wick and Fish Island, located on the western edge of the park, to produce and combine Here East's 'unique' qualities [5] with the culture-led post-Olympic regeneration project of the Stratford Waterfront — The Heritage and Cultural Quarter (HCQ) — on the other side. Here East is trying to leverage art and culture to form a 'technology cluster' and business destination.

In their promotion of new technology clusters, policy makers and private property developers classically promise affordable housing, studio space, and conservation of historical buildings; however, artists in Hackney Wick and Fish Island are increasingly being threatened by rising property values that price them out of their own studios. The area has become a massive urban economic redevelopment project. Artists and the local working class are pinning their hopes on section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act [6] (AKA 'planning gain') which requires developers to contribute toward affordable housing and community facilities in exchange for permission to develop.

The state and private developers pay lip service to preserving 'local characteristics' and supporting the arts and cultural communities; however, they consider these communities to be a useful but disposable interim stage in attracting more profitable future

developments.[7] A local artist interviewed stated his concern that artists are merely 'put on display and instrumentalised.'

HCQ is a classical model of large-scale top down arts-and-culture-led urban development that seeks to assemble museums, public arts, theaters, educational institutions, large and small businesses etc. as an economic growth strategy by branding the place, boosting international competitiveness, and attracting private-sector investment and cultural consumption. There is little evidence that local artists and communities actually benefit from such projects;[8] rather they set the conditions for an acceleration of property development, gentrification, displacement, and the reproduction of inequality.

The reorganisation of urban policy to serve technology sectors has further threatened artists' freedom and livelihoods, as creativity is considered a resource for the pursuit of profit-making and economic growth. The public policy turns artists into entrepreneurs, allowing little space for different forms of artistic creativity that are not economically viable.

Gentrifying creativity

By further shifting the notion of creativity to the market economy and gentrifying creativity, artists are being forced from an area that was built on their human endeavor and creativity along with other workers. One local artist lamented that 'I worry that an "artist in the

space" is just a graffiti panel, an aesthetic gloss put onto a place to lend some credence or legitimacy.'

Under the auspicious umbrella of urban 'revival', the gentrification of inner-city artists' communities is often viewed as a natural or inevitable process, as if the presence of artists naturally led to property booms and gentrification. But art and artists do not in themselves generate new investment; rather, local authorities and developers make industrial infrastructure more desirable for capital investment by promoting art and culture and rebranding urban industrial decay as aesthetic in order to attract the professional classes and private business.

UK's Technology City is a place where policy makers seek to coalesce the arts and technology sectors under one umbrella and translate human creativity into economic value. It elucidates the inherent contradiction between the politics of creativity subscribed to by urban policy makers and the technology sector, as opposed to artistic freedom. The creativity pursued by many artists frequently exercises and strives for an artistic autonomy that transcends market interests;[9] however, the politics of 'creativity' in the Technology City further absorbs art into market relations. Aesthetic expression must justify itself in terms of productivity and economic outcomes. Depoliticizing 'creativity' masks the inherent incompatibility of absorbing artistic expression into market relations, justifying urban dispossession.

Conclusion

Silicon Roundabout and Here East illustrate the forces that shape our current environment and their impact on local and artists' communities as they elucidate an inherent contradiction between the politics of creativity subscribed to by policy makers and the technology sector, versus artistic freedom and working-class sustainability. These forces absorb artistic expression into market relations, justifying and accelerating state- and capital-led accumulation through urban dispossession, diminishing people's access to the very city itself.

To imagine and help build democratic and just cities, more research needs to be done, interviewing and surveying artists and other residents to identity, quantify, and contextualize their experiences, struggles, and resistance, and compare East London with other utopias of policy/dystopias of practice in such places as Bilbao, Berlin, San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, Beijing, and Mexico City.

The Institute for Media and Creative Industries at Loughborough University London and SPACE hope that this brief pilot study of the literature on the places we live and work will shed some light on the directions that further investigations might take and galvanize actions to resist market-driven development and instead make urban spaces equitable and sustainable so that artists and other working communities can flourish.

Notes

1   Sam Shead, 'London tech companies are now taking up more office space than banks and law firms', *Business Insider*, November 16, 2015
     `goo.gl/Eq3zl3`

2   'Tech City'
     `goo.gl/Ib1Tdb`

3   Marc Martí-Costa & Marc Pradel i Miquel, 'The knowledge city against urban creativity? Artists' workshops and urban regeneration in Barcelona,' *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19, no 1 (2012): 92–108

4   Susan Jones, 'Artists' low income and status are international issues,' Guardian, January 12, 2015
     `goo.gl/QH9J4g`

5   Robert Bevan, *Fish Island & Hackney Wick South Conservation Area Appraisal & Draft Management Guideline*, London Legacy Development Corporation, 2014
     `goo.gl/QuCa3K`

     Max Nathan, Emma Vandore and Georgina Voss, 'Terraforming technology city: place branding and spatial imaginaries in inner East London,' Working paper, University of Birmingham, 2015, 9
     `goo.gl/QvcW3b`

6   See Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 106 Planning Obligations
`goo.gl/pRwSuo`

7   'Fish Island, Tower Hamlets,' *Hidden London*
`goo.gl/VWTx0a`

8   Sharon Zukin, *The cultures of cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995)

Malcolm Miles, 'Interruptions: Testing the Rhetoric of Culturally Led Urban Development,' *Urban Studies* 42, no. 5/6 (2005): 889–911

Betriza Garcia, 'Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration in Western European Cities: Lessons from Experience, Prospects for the Future, *The Journal of the Local Economy* 19, no. 4 (2004): 312-326

Roberta Comunian and Oliver Mould, 'The weakest link: creative industries, flagship cultural projects and regeneration,' City, Culture and Society 5 no. 2 (2014): 65-74

9   Kirsten Forkert (2013) *Artistic lives: a study of creativity in two European cities* (Farham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 10

Artists in technology sectors / technology in artists' spaces

ShinJoung Yeo
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The context of our research

The last few decades have seen a convergence of artists' communities and technology clusters in former industrial districts of light manufacturing and warehousing across the global North. There has long been a tendency for seemingly desolate inner-city industrial sites where manufacturing and storage concerns have departed to be colonized by artists in search of cheap rents and large studio spaces, thereby reshaping urban landscapes. A similar trend is emergent in parts of the global South.

The more recent transformation is that these artists' enclaves are being encroached upon by high-technology sectors, in such cities as London, San Francisco, Berlin, New York, Barcelona, and Beijing. This convergence/clash of technology clusters and artists' communities has been much welcomed by policy makers around the globe as an urban development strategy. These local authorities seek to construct 'creativity cities' that feature

new technologies and cultural production at their very core, in a magic amalgam of hardware, software, education, and aesthetics.[1] They regard the intersection of artists' communities and technology sectors as marking the growth of a 'new' economy in response to the declining industrial one. This is seen as the very harbinger of rebirth: an alleviation of the crisis of industrial inner cities that promises prosperity for all by valuing 'creativity' and generating a large quantity of well-paid employment opportunities and wealth in hitherto-deprived urban neighbourhoods.

Despite the premise and its promise, the convergence of technology clusters and artists' communities has arguably offered little to artists struggling to survive and exercise artistic freedom and creativity; and as gentrification gathers speed, the urban poor and working class are increasingly displaced from these areas. 'Creative Cities' have not helped either of the populations at which they are (rather euphemistically) targeted. Instead, the expansion of technology sectors in old industrial districts has negatively transformed arts neighbourhoods that once provided alternative spaces for social, cultural, and artistic experimentation.

During the course of our research, we have come to question current urban policy's promotion of 'creativity' and the convergence and emerging dynamics between technology sectors and artists' communities. We need to think anew about cities in which both artists and the urban poor are supported, rather than displaced; artistic experimentation is encouraged and fostered; and technology is seen as an ordinary object of use rather than a desirable end in itself.

Because of the time available, the place where we live and work, and the scope of a pilot project, we have focused on two cases: East London's Silicon Roundabout and Here East. These sites represent very different development contexts, but both were stimulated by public policies associated with the 2012 London Olympics and the UK's 2010 *East Technology City Initiative* (usually called 'Technology City' by the media and policy makers). The initiative was designed to provide a springboard to reorganise Britain's economic base and accelerate its arrival at the peak of a new, globalized digital economy, in much the way that the City of London had become the world financial centre for savings and investment outside the US. This pivoting of the UK economy has been affirmed in the government's 2017 Green Paper *Building Our Industrial Strategy*, which includes the digital economy as one of ten economic pillars that can purportedly guarantee a robust, sturdy future in the wake of departure from the European Union.[2]

Silicon Roundabout, in Old Street, Shoreditch, is considered London's first official technology cluster. We chose this neighbourhood as one focus because artists had long occupied warehouses and other light-industrial buildings there. Here East, on the other hand, is a brand new, artificially-engineered technology cluster, built as part of urban development after the 2012 Olympics. Unlike Silicon Roundabout, Here East had no corporate identity. It had been part of Hackney Marsh, one of the largest areas of common land in London, which was used as a dump for buildings damaged by World War II air raids. Here East represented an attempt

to assimilate a longstanding artists' neighbourhood on nearby Fish Island and Hackney Wick into newly-developed, large-scale cultural development projects in Stratford, at the southern end of the Olympic Park. With the overarching premise of creative-cities discourse, the plan was to create a networked technology cluster from Shoreditch to Stratford.

The Olympics meet technology

The Olympic Games depend on massive public subvention: forty venues are required, covering five hundred hectares. This has huge implications for construction, maintenance, transport, post-Olympic utilization, gentrification, consumption, pollution, noise, light, water, and sewerage.[3] Despite the local Olympic Authority boasting that the 2012 Games were the 'greenest ever,' the event produced three and a half million tons of carbon dioxide[4] compared to 550 million tons of annual UK emissions.[5] Throughout successive phases of planning and implementation, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), local organizers, and their sponsors sought social licenses to operate—ways of legitimizing their environmental impact.[6]

Part of the strategy for obtaining this social license was a new and improved infrastructure for all and renewed life chances for the poor, in areas characterized as under-privileged and even dangerous. In the run-up to the Games, East London was consistently

portrayed as an area of crime, violence, poverty, and deprivation—the detritus of humanity among the detritus of a lost industrial economy.[7] Such descriptions tended to omit the role of austerity and market-driven social and economic policies in producing and maintaining structural inequality in East London, not to mention the vitality of communities in weathering repeated social and financial storms.

Underneath this monolithic mainstream portrayal, East London has long boasted a diverse immigrant working class and culture. Its rich social and cultural history arches from women's suffrage and labour movements in the 19th century to flourishing local artists' communities today.[8] Instead of foregrounding that history, East London was conveniently labelled a 'wasteland' in need of transformation and 'regeneration,' purportedly driven by a market economy, but in fact with massive state subsidies to capital.

The real impact of publicly-subsidized professional sports on economic growth and civic culture has never been established beyond reasonable doubt, but that lack of proof has rarely stood in the way of enthusiastically providing welfare to private interests.[9] Governments rush to compete for the privilege of hosting these events, buoyed by boosterish arguments and ignoring cultural critiques and cost-benefit analyses, other than at the greenwashing margins. As a consequence, sports are now governed by administrators and venture capitalists keen on state subsidies. Enter the world of policy-based evidence masquerading as evidence-based public policy.[10]

To host the Olympics, six East London boroughs — Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest — were selected. Then-Mayor Ken Livingstone proclaimed that the Games would break East London's cycle of poverty. With public funding, the largest urban development project ever planned for Europe was projected to deliver tens of thousands of jobs in impoverished areas, and spur UK business globally. Due to its scale and projected impact, this Olympic-led urban development received a great deal of attention. Media coverage of the Olympic development overshadowed Technology City, but it, too, represented a major political-economic policy undergirding the restructuring of East London. The area had already experienced redevelopment projects, from the clearance of inner-city slums after World War II to the private-property led transformation of the Docklands in the 1980s. The 2012 Olympics and East Technology City were just the latest iteration of transformational projects targeting the area.[11]

Soon after embarking on this Olympic-led redevelopment, then-Prime Minister David Cameron announced governmental plans for the East End to become a world-leading 'Technology City' to compete with Silicon Valley.[12] In 2010, he proclaimed that 'Silicon Valley is the leading place in the world for high-technology growth and innovation,' but 'our ambition is to bring together the creativity and energy of Shoreditch and the incredible possibilities of the Olympic Park to help make East London one of the world's great technology centres.'[13] The Olympic Park media center would become an 'accelerator space'

after the Games, putting East London at the core of the nation's 'new economy.'[14]

Technology City was born in the context of the global financial crisis, which exposed the UK's heavy dependence on the financial services and property sectors. In that context of crisis, the idea was to resuscitate and diversify an ailing economy through technology. Indeed, the internet is Britain's second-biggest economic sector, followed by the property market.[15] The media, information, and communication industries generate 8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—the size of auto manufacturing and oil and gas combined.[16] The government called technology the 'one industry future in Britain.'[17]

The UK government established the Technology City Investment Organization, funded by what is now the Department of International Trade (née Trade & Investment Department) to support Technology City and offer government grants and tax benefits of up to 78% for private investors who backed risky startups.[18] The government also began rewriting its intellectual property and copyright laws to benefit the internet sector and harmonize with US norms.

So East London, once the heartland of the UK industrial economy, underwent radical changes in accord with the country's shift toward a digital economy, intertwined with the Olympic-led mega regeneration. These two factors are not mutually exclusive; rather, they reinforce one another in reshaping the area. The arts, artists, and their neighbourhoods are being strategically deployed as instruments for economic growth.

The future
is culture

The Olympic Park near the Westfield Mall, photo: ShinJoung

Shoreditch, artists' enclave[19]

Shoreditch was once London's primary light-industrial district, a network of warehouses and suppliers specializing in furniture, clothing, and printing.[20] However, like many other cities in the Global North, by the 1970s, the city's industrial base declined as a New International Division of Labor drew jobs and investment to the Global South.[21] Formerly industrial-ized, comparatively wealthy nations embarked on structural economic adjustment, claiming that they would retrain blue-collar workers away from mining and manufacturing and towards services and culture. There were supposed to be four, largely painless, changes in the Global North's shift away from production: the preeminence of professionalism and technique, the importance of theory to innovate and generate public policies, the formation of a discourse of the future, and new cultural technologies.[22]

Shoreditch and its surrounding neighborhoods tell a different story. The legacy of manufacturing's departure was a largely disused built infrastructure.[23] As a consequence, the neighborhoods began to attract artists from the late 1970s, who moved into cheap and obsolete former factories and warehouses. Spacious and open floors and high ceilings were rapidly converted into live-and-work spaces.[24] Until the 1990s, Shoreditch remained a relatively cheap place to live and work, while being close to the city center.[25] Property owners were willing to lease 'under-valued' properties cheaply, rather than leave them fallow. Low rents and strong social networks benefited many artists, allowing

them to survive on irregularly-waged jobs and periodic sales of art.[26]

Similar stories could be told of New York's SoHo, Wicker Park in Chicago, San Francisco's Mission, and the Art Walk and Gallery Row in Los Angeles. In surveying such developments in Manhattan, Stanley Aronowitz suggests that: 'the everyday life of classic bohemians was a monumental struggle to beat the 'system' by winning and reconfiguring urban space in ways that were simply unavailable to those caught in the job machine. Bohemians attempted to enter the realm of freedom — life minus (much) wage labor — without the material means.'[27]

This tendency has a history. From jazz musicians to street artists, cultural workers have long labored without regular compensation and security. The history of live performance and organic artwork in this informal cultural sector, as opposed to grand theatrical and dance companies or *bourgeois* galleries and museums, showed to state and capital alike that all workers could supposedly move from security to insecurity, certainty to uncertainty, salary to wage, firm to project, and profession to precarity — with smiles on their faces.[28] In the case of London, such tendencies were articulated to the austerity strategies of the Thatcherite govern-ments that have dominated UK public policy since 1979.[29] The socially-engineered precarious artistic life was presented as if it were a lifestyle choice — a symbol of freedom that could be incorporated into urban-development policy.

Hence the dramatic growth of co-working spaces, based on artists' studios, because the technology sector

relies on self-employed entrepreneurs, freelancers, and contract workers. Britain is one of the top five countries in terms of information-technology contractors, outpacing the US. There has been a 10% rise over the last year.[30] This kind of work is celebrated as ideal for 'self-motivated' 'risk takers,' who are supposedly in control of their working conditions. 'Flexible' hours make it seem as though they are working outside the capitalist wage-relation, living a bohemian, artistic lifestyle. In reality, today's working conditions promoted by the technology sector exemplify managerial practices[31] designed to reduce costs and increase productivity and profit, while transferring economic risk to workers. Luc Boltanski and his collaborators describe this as the 'new spirit' of capitalism. It celebrates flexibility, non-hierarchy, creativity and autonomy as mechanisms of control.[32]

An extensive literature has shown that the culture and aesthetic of artists' neighborhoods are appropriated, commodified, packaged, and sold to attract elite classes and property developers, displacing existing artists and 'undesirable' working-class communities by propping up depressed inner-city property markets.[33] This is what George Yúdice has famously called 'culture as resource,' or 'the expediency of culture.'[34] Shoreditch's cultural scene and artist lifestyle are being branded and deployed in just this way to transform the area into a destination for cultural consumption and investment.

Ruth Glass coined the word 'gentrification' in 1964 to describe this urban change: a process of inner-city transformation through new investment

in low-valued property, leading to changing urban demographics through the displacement of working-class residents by the middle class.[35] In the fifty years since, gentrification has become multifaceted and heterogeneous, encompassing new social relations, urban aesthetics, and residential and non-residential places of work and leisure.[36]

Sometimes the displacement and inequality embedded in such urban development are camouflaged by art and culture. Concomitantly, the language of gentrification in urban policy has been euphemized by such terms as 'urban renaissance,' 'regeneration,' and 'renewal.'[37] Rather than displacing tradition and survival these words appear to promise revival.

Under the auspicious umbrella of urban 'revival,' the gentrification of inner-city artists' communities is often viewed as inevitable, as if the presence of artists led naturally to property booms. This process is far from a given, however; rather, corporate state and capital interventions play a vital role in reorganizing urban spaces, 'revitalizing' decayed industrial neighborhoods by reopening them to capital.

In the 1990s, the Tony Blair-led New Labour government implemented the notion of 'urban renaissance,'[38] which placed the arts, culture, and entertainment at the core of urban regeneration. The goal was to bring the middle class and market forces into the 'social mix' of inner-city, low-income areas.[39] New Labour's urban policy promoted art and culture as a means of renewing the decayed and decaying parts of the country as well as enlarging the various cultural industries through tourism, museums, galleries, heritage

sites, and cultural festivals, thereby appealing to middle-class and urban professionals.

This new wave of urban policy idealized brownfield land and unused industrial buildings as platforms on which to create new urban living by encouraging mixed-use development suitable for working, living, and socializing.[40] Because parts of East London where artists were already living and working, like Shoreditch, Hoxton, and Whitechapel, were already converting factories and warehouse buildings into art studios and live/work spaces,[41] they provided policy makers with a model of 'urban renaissance.'[42] Art and artists did not in themselves generate new investment, but they made the built-in industrial infrastructure more desirable to capital by promoting and funding art and culture, rebranding urban industrial decay as aesthetic, and elevating the lifestyle of artists and their embellishment of lapsed industrial sites a means of attracting niche professional classes and private business.

The run-down, gritty brownfield neighborhoods where artists live and work have hence come to be branded as 'edgy' and 'authentic'; in reality, they are part of a commodified urban landscape that can be bought and sold. As David Harvey points out, 'while uniqueness and particularity are crucial to the definition of special qualities, the requirement of tradability means that no item can be so unique or so special as to be entirely outside of the monetary calculus.'[43] In 2002, the *New York Times* travel section described Shoreditch as a 'great place to go bar-crawling on a Saturday night, or to take in live music at clubs like Cargo, but it seems to have lost some of its original East End vibe.'[44]

Against this backdrop, East London Technology City was located by the Old Street Roundabout to hasten the reorganization of the urban landscape in the interest of digital technology by incorporating existing cultural industries and artists' communities and appropriating art and culture for market relations. This seemed to promise an endless expansion of opportunity for creative self-expression and employment. The comparatively cheap and easy access to the making and circulation of meaning afforded by the encounter of new technology with art was thought to have eroded a one-way hold on culture that saw a small segment of the world as producers and the larger segment as consumers, and to make for a cleaner economy. New technologies would supposedly allow us all to become simultaneously cultural consumers and producers ('prosumers') — no more factory conditions, no more factory emissions.[45]

Further gentrifying creativity / Silicon Roundabout

To inaugurate East London Technology City, the UK government renamed the area around the Old Street Roundabout, at the boundary of the London Borough of Hackney and Islington, as *Silicon Roundabout.* It was no accident that the state anchored Technology City there. One obvious reason was its proximity to the City of London, Europe's financial center, because access to capital is vital

for technology start-ups. The other was that policy makers enlisted the Old Street Roundabout because of its growing international reputation as a new art-and-culture scene in order to entice multinational firms and elite skilled labor.

The term 'Silicon Roundabout' was coined by Dopplr's Chief Technology Officer Matt Biddulph, who called it 'the ever-growing community of fun startups in London's Old Street area.'[46] While this gave the impression that there was a well-established technology cluster, that was far from true. When Biddulph noticed a number of technology and design companies near to the Old Street Roundabout, he jokingly said that 'If this goes on, some awful estate agent will start calling us Silicon Roundabout.' It was considered an inside joke among technology people: 'Ha ha, it's 'Silicon Roundabout.'[47] But it was quickly picked up by Tim Bradshaw from the *Financial Times*, and echoed by *Wired* magazine.[48] With such sudden media attention, 'Silicon Roundabout' was soon branded as such by the property industry, which fully exploited the idea of a 'technology cluster' to promote the 'new' economy centered in East London.[49]

When the UK government placed Silicon Roundabout as its Technology City flagship, there wasn't a fully-developed 'technology cluster.'[50] Film and television were heavily concentrated in central and West London; East London was characterized by the arts, fashion, graphic design, advertising, public relations, printing, publishing, software development, and the like.[51] Rather than a 'technology cluster,' there was a mixture of new and residual cultural industries, with digital work often contracted out by traditional media industries in the

center of London as a way to test unknown technologies,[52] and bohemian artists willing to work at the margin as contingent labor in return for aesthetic freedom. Policy makers sought to consolidate these sectors under one 'creative' umbrella and translate human creativity into economic value.[53]

In pursuing the construction of technology clusters, UK policy makers adopted Richard Florida's controversial notion of the 'creative city,'[54] which has been taken up and popularized around the world. This concept is based on the assumption that 'creativity' can become a vital competitive advantage, and that a 'creative class ®'— comprising young professionals like engineers, architects, designers, artists, and so on — is the engine of economic growth and urban revitalization. Florida argues that a 'creative class' can revitalize post-industrial sites devastated by the relocation of manufacturing to places with cheaper labor pools. The revival of such cities is supposedly driven by a magic elixir of tolerance, technology, and talent, as measured by same-sex households, broadband connections, and higher degrees respectively. Florida has even trade-marked the concept: his claim to own the 'creative class ®' is asserted with the US Patent and Trademark Office under registration number 3298801.

According to this logic, cities should provide diverse cultural and social amenities and conditions to cater to these influential groups of young elite professionals, who are supposed to fuel the new economy through high-technology sectors. In Florida's urban context, art and culture are commercialized and commodified in order to be consumed by the 'creative

class.' In his 2010 East End Tech City speech, Cameron saluted this model of the 'creative city,' invoking San Francisco as an exemplar and stressing the importance of a 'vibrant cultural scene' for Technology City.[55]

Although this discourse celebrated newness, it was actually rather venerable. In 1848, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that 'a creative economy is the fuel of magnificence.'[56] And Ronald Reagan's speech that launched his successful 1966 campaign for the governorship of California began:

I propose . . . 'A Creative Society'. . . to discover, enlist and mobilize the incredibly rich human resources of California [through] innumerable people of creative talent.[57]

Reagan's rhetoric publicly birthed today's idea of technology unlocking the creativity that is allegedly lurking, unbidden, in individuals, thereby permitting them to become happy, productive — and without full-time employment.

But the fantasy has been found wanting numerous times. There is minimal proof that a creative class exists, or that 'creative cities' outperform their drab brethren economically. Companies seek skills when deciding where to locate their businesses — but skills also seek work. City centers largely attract the young who are not yet breeding. The centrality of gay culture in the Floridian calculus derives from assuming same-sex households are queer (but university dorms and sorority/fraternity houses are not quite there). Even if this were accurate, many 'successful' US cities are culturally reactionary in terms of free expression,

sexuality, race, and feminism (consider Orlando and Phoenix). The idea of urbanism incipient in US demographic statistics includes the suburbs (which now hold more residents than do cities) so that, too, is suspect in terms of the importance of downtown lofts to economies. There is no evidence of an overlap of tastes, values, living arrangements, or locations between artists and accountants, despite their being bundled together in the creative concept; nor is it sensible to assume other countries could replicate the massive internal mobility of the US population. Finally, other surveys pour scorn on the claim that quality of life, rather than low cost, good communications technology, proximity to markets, and adequate transport, is central to selecting business campuses. A European Commission evaluation of twenty-nine Cities of Culture disclosed that their principal goal — economic growth stimulated by the public subvention of culture to renew failed cities — has itself failed. Glasgow, for instance, was initially hailed as a success of the program; but many years after the rhetoric, it has seen no sustained growth.[58]

Despite the government's rhetoric of supporting and nurturing local startups and British business, global corporate giants such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, Intel, and Barclays, *inter alia,* dominate East London Technology City, courtesy of generous tax breaks. In 2007, only 8% of London office space was occupied by the technology sector. By 2013, this number was more than 33% — more than finance.[59] In 2015, there were 3,228 technology firms per kilometre in the EC1V postal code centered around the Old Street roundabout, compared to just 58 technology firms

per kilometre across the remainder of London.[60]
Silicon Roundabout is bursting at its seams, so
Facebook is expanding and building its new offices
with fifteen hundred employees in nearby Fitzrovia.[61]
Google's campus opened on Old Street in 2012,
offering co-working space for start-ups and cafés
and high-speed internet access. In this mutually
parasitic arrangement, Google can quickly acquire
those companies that become economically viable.
It recently announced plans to expand its ten-story
headquarters in Kings Cross, which houses seven
thousand staff.[62] Amazon is developing new
headquarters just north of Liverpool Street Station,
and will also move to Shoreditch.

Artists and technologists:
Two faces of a new kind of worker

The expansion of the technology industry was
supposed to be good news for artists struggling to
survive, since the technology sector places 'creativity'
at the center of its ethos. But despite 'creativity' being
the prevailing rhetoric of Technology City, the majority
of artists continue to flounder. They have limited and
largely unsustainable financial support. The reorgani-
sation of urban policy to serve technology sectors has
further threatened their freedom and livelihoods. In
reality, 'creativity' is a resource for profit-making and
economic growth; but it does little to nurture artistic
freedom or sustain artistic communities.

Shoreditch and its surrounding neighborhoods, the heartland of Technology City, embody the gentrification that has pushed existing artists and art spaces out, to the point where the very term 'gentrification' has become interchangeable with the syntagram 'Shoreditch Effect.'[63] Once the home of many artists and successive waves of Huguenot, Irish, Ashkenazi, and Bangla immigrant communities, Shoreditch is being occupied by corporate offices, luxury residences, coffee shops, bars, private galleries, and restaurants to serve the influx of elite young technology professionals.[64]

In the current iteration of Technology City, public policy privileges entrepreneurship and digital businesses. As living costs rise across East London, artists are being priced out and evicted from their homes and studios. There is no provision or protection for artists' workspaces or affordable housing for the working class, much less a living wage. Thirty per cent of artists are slated to lose their places of work in the next five years —amounting to the loss of 3,500 artists' work spaces.[65]

Meanwhile, the professionalization of education in art practices has meant that 35,000 students graduate each year from art and design colleges in London, which increases the pressure on space and work.[66] This because the spread of creative-industries discourse across public policy has seen tertiary education impose stress tests on itself that require it to appear vocational in everything it does, from art history to drawing to archeology to theoretical physics, as the relative autonomy of research and teaching from state and capital is progressively compromised.

Did you receive a fee for your last
exhibition in a publicly-funded space?

8% Received a fee over £1,000

21.1% Received a fee under £1,000

70.90% Didn't receive a fee
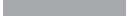
responses : 261
source: DHA & a-n The Artist Information Company
(2013) Paying Artists research Phase I

Initially, of course, artists were categorized under Florida's trademark class and hence foregrounded by policy makers; but so far, they have not benefited from either the expansion of the 'new' economy or focused development projects in their name. A third of artists in the UK earn only £10,000 a year, which amounts to 66% of a living wage.[67] They constitute a growing 'flexible' labor force that lacks job security, company pensions, and other benefits. Artists' precarious working conditions[68] and livelihoods have been compounded by cuts to government funding as part of the reallocation of money upwards that is popularly euphemized as austerity. Between 2010 and 2015, Arts Council England's funding was cut by 32%, and that situation was greatly exacerbated by local-council cuts of 40%.[69] According to the Paying Artists campaign, in 2014, 71% of artists were not even paid for exhibitions at publicly-funded galleries.[70]

One in seven of the 'self-employed' workforce earns 40% less than their full-time counterparts.[71] Between 2008 and 2015, the number of freelancers in the UK increased by 36% to just under two million.[72] Almost 80% of self-employed people struggle at or below the poverty line.[73] As we noted above, artists are prototypical workers in a digital economy that relies on a 'flexible' workforce.[74] They embody 'the cognitariat,' a term embraced by everyone from the lapsed leftist Reaganite Alvin Toffler to the Marxist radical Antonio Negri.[75] If there is a commonality between artists and technology workers, it is that they are both part of an increasingly precarious casualised workforce laboring under the guise of 'creativity.'

As we said in our introductory remarks, this phenomenon is far from unique to London. In San Francisco, an exemplar of the successful technology city that Silicon Roundabout seeks to emulate, artists are being displaced on a massive scale. In a survey conducted by the San Francisco Arts Commission, over 70% of six hundred artist-respondents said they had been displaced from their workplace, home, or both. The remainder were concerned about potential displacement in the near future.[76] Using the same tactic as British local authorities, San Francisco offered a tax break to technology companies for moving to the economically-deprived areas of Mid-Market and the Tenderloin. The working class, small businesses, and artists were priced out of these areas, and San Francisco became one of the most unequal cities in the world; yet it is listed at the top of the 'Creativity Index.'[77]

San Francisco's widening income disparity

Percentile	Household income 2012	Change 2007–2012*	Percentage change
20th	$21,313	-$4,309	-17%**
40th	$52,865	-$3,743	-7%**
50th	$73,012	-$2,311	-3%
60th	$95,783	-$1,018	-1%
80th	$160,753	-$795	0%
95th	$353,576	+$27,815	+9%

*Adjusted for inflation   **Statistically significant
Source: Brookings Institution

The creativity pursued by many artists is potentially opposed to capitalism, because it functions beyond markets;[78] but the politics of 'creativity' absorbs art into market relations. Aesthetic expression must justify itself in terms of productivity and economic outcomes. As Andrew Ross points out, 'artists have been pressured to contribute to capitalist economic development, and increasingly to justify state-funded arts activities for a return on investment and economic values.'[79]

Under Britain's Technology City policy, creativity is measured and quantified.[80] And as public policy redefines artists as entrepreneurs, there is little space for creativity that cannot be sold. By gentrifying creativity, artists and the working class are being forced from a city that was built on their endeavor. One artist pays tribute to a lost present that is rapidly becoming the past in these words:

A Shoreditch stampede flooded in from the city at the weekend, stopped out, and has now gone home. The artists' warehouse studios are now a flicker of PC screensavers between partitioned walls. It's the future; it's survival of the fittest. It is history in the making, and it's taking over — too quick, too soon. It is out of control, and I couldn't hold on. Hackney, I love you. I lost you[81]

HereEast
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@hereeast #canalside hereeast.com

st, London's home for
presents: Canalside
ants, bars and shops.

Here East, photo: ShinJoung Yeo

Here East: Reengineering the Olympic Park and surrounding areas

One of the central plans for London's Technology City is to link technology clusters from Shoreditch to the Olympic Park and Stratford, in order to attract foreign capital investment. Here East is on the site of the former Press and Broadcast Centre for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is a joint venture between real-estate investors Delancey and data-center operator Infinity SDC and is under the jurisdiction of The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), the planning authority within the Mayor's Office.[82] LLDC is responsible for the development of Olympic Park and has extended land-use planning jurisdiction in the surrounding London boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest.[83] It was granted a 200-year lease to build the taxpayer-funded Here East site.[84]

Previously called ICITY, Here East opened in 2015 as part of a £1bn initiative to boost Technology City. It claims to be the largest technology hub/'digital quarter' in Europe. London's then-Mayor, Boris Johnson, declared that

ICITY is the final jewel in the crown of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and as a world class digital hub that will employ thousands of people I'm delighted to welcome them on board. Located on the western edge of Olympic Park, Here East is one of eight former Olympic venues incorporated into East London redevelopment.

Chief Executive Officer Gavin Poole states that

This is really a regeneration exercise in East London, we're just doing it through technology and digital industries because of the facilities and connectivity we have here'. [85]

Here East has followed Silicon Valley's technology-cluster model in attempting to create an academic-industrial complex, where researchers and industries serve corporate interests. Its tenants currently include Loughborough University London, BT Sport, and Infinity SDC. Hackney Community College's Technology City apprentices, University College London's robotics lab, Wayne McGregor's Random Dance — one of Britain's leading contemporary ballet companies — and the long-time Hackney Wick artist organization and affordable artist studio provider SPACE are all planning to make Here East their home. Alongside these organizations, Delancey and technology consultants Entiq boast the Plexal 'Innovation center,' with up to 350 co-working spaces. Prices start at £200/month per desk.[86] Plexal says this is Europe's largest Technology Innovation Centre. On the River Lea Navigation canal side, overlooking Hackney Wick, there are now several cafés, bars, and restaurants.

Unlike Silicon Roundabout, which was tactically embedded in a cultural scene to exploit an existing artistic neighborhood, Here East is a brand new, artificially-designed technology cluster built as part of the Olympics-led regeneration project that includes art in its plans. With little prior profile other than a giant pile of discarded refrigerators and freezers,[87] Here East has

created a technology city image, manufacturing an identify. dn&co and architects Hawkins\Brown were hired to paint the place as a 'home of making.'[88] They deployed 'maker culture' as a strategy that drew on various façades — grassroots, counter-culture and anti-capitalist — while promoting capitalist entrepreneurship.

Hackney Wick, a compromised haven for artists

As we have seen, Here East's 'maker culture' brand didn't emerge from a vacuum.[89] It enlisted and encroached upon the nearby artists' neighborhood of Hackney Wick and Fish Island, located on the western edge of the Park, in order to produce Here East's 'unique' qualities. Hackney Wick and Fish Island have long been hidden backwaters neighboring the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Following a path similar to Shoreditch's development, relatively affordable industrial infrastructure attracted artists. Approximately seven thousand live and work in East London, and Fish Island and Hackney Wick to the north once housed 750 artists' studios.[90] The surrounding warehouses and rundown brownfield buildings offered temporary canvas for street artists, covered with layers of graffiti. Now, the Hackney Wick and Fish Island artists' communities are undergoing radical changes. The area is sandwiched in between, and integrated into, Here East technology cluster on one side, and on the other, the culture-led post-Olympic regeneration project of Stratford Waterfront.

LLDC promotes Hackney Wick and Fish Island as 'authentic' spaces with special 'local cultural characteristics' that offer 'unique selling points.' The area is being considered as a new 'strategic place' to develop by highlighting the 'local creative character of the area' with 'historical heritage assets.'[91] Some parts are now designated for preservation and enhancement as the Fish Island & White Post Lane Conservation Area.[92] However, this 'strategic place' is increasingly being appropriated and privatized by corporate and market forces as capital flows into the area. Property developers call Fish Island the 'new Shoreditch' and a 'goldmine.'[93]

As noted earlier, LLDC controls a significant amount of Hackney Wick. Its planning power allows it to buy land through Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) (akin to the doctrine of eminent domain).[94] CPOs permit government bodies to obtain property without owners' consent, if the proposed development is deemed to be for 'public betterment.'[95] LLDC has granted permission to several private developers to develop mix-used areas. Peabody is building 'Fish Island Village' with 408 residential units and commercial spaces in Hackney Wick.[96] At least eight developers are currently looking to exploit the area.[97] As their world turns into a £1bn urban economic development project, local artists and the working class are pinning their hopes on section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act[98] (AKA 'planning gain'), which requires developers to contribute towards affordable housing and community facilities in exchange for permission to develop. But developers often bypass section 106 by claiming that affordable housing requirements would render projects unprofitable.[99]

Despite LLDC's repeated promises of affordable housing, studio space, and conservation of historical buildings, artists in Hackney Wick and Fish Island are threatened by rising property values. Mother Studios, one of the first to open in the area in 2001, was forced to close in 2015. After a battle with LLDC, a former warehouse and work/live space at Vittoria Wharf, which was used for recording, screen printing, and hosting the popular Tunnel Vision radio program, *inter alia*, is scheduled for demolition to make way for a pedestrian bridge. Vittoria Wharf was supposed to be protected within the Fish Island & White Post Lane Conservation Area,[100] but LLDC acquired part of it through a CPO to build a bridge connecting Fish Island, Hackney Wick, and Olympic Park. Hence Robin Grey's 'Hackney Gentrification Song.'[102]

While state and private developers preserve 'local characteristics' and even support the establishment of arts and cultural communities — such as an art space in White Building and the Yard community theater — in order to declare an area 'authentic' and appeal to the new influx of young middle-class professionals, visitors, and investment, they consider these same arts and cultural communities to be useful but disposable interim stages in attracting more profitable developments.[103] A local artist we interviewed was concerned about 'artists being put on display and instrumentalised.'

Changes in street art across Hackney Wick and Fish Island signify how the arts are being reconfigured as instruments of corporate-driven urban development.[104] Prior to the Olympics, graffiti was scrubbed away and painted over by internationally-renowned street artists, funded by Bloomberg and facilitated by

the Canal & River Trust. In the process, street art, which is usually located outside established art practice, was taken out of context of the place and summarily institutionalized.[105] Sweet Toof, a long-time Hackney Wick street artist, put it this way:

They were constantly evolving and available for anyone to paint on. Now they have commissioned these murals and covered them in coats of anti-graffiti paint, so we all have to look at them for the next 10 years. It completely goes against the spirit of street art... There is a general respect between artists — people paint around each other and are careful about what they paint over. But with the commercialisation of street art, it's becoming pay-as-you-go wall — every surface sold off to the highest bidder [106]

Street art & large institutions in East London's Heritage and Cultural Quarter

A local artist we interviewed lamented that 'an 'artist in the space' is just a graffiti panel, an aesthetic gloss put onto a place to lend some credence or legitimacy.' Now street art has become a must-see tourist stop from Shoreditch to Fish Island, with Google maps of street artists and private tours of the most popular graffiti areas. Property developers invite established street artists to paint temporary fences to display community partnership and maintain the area's 'unique

aesthetic.'[107] As Loretta Lees and her collaborators tersely point out,

'[t]he outcome of this economic valorization of the gentrification aesthetic is an increase in property prices which leads, ironically, to displacement of artists, those very people whose aesthetic dispositions helped to initiate the influx of middle-class professionals.'[108]

Here East is trying to leverage art and culture to construct a 'technology cluster' and business destination. On the one hand, it is impinging on neighboring artists' communities. On the other, it is extending its geographic territory, linking with well-established cultural institutions via the ongoing 'cultural and educational quarter' project, a large part of the Stratford Waterfront and an extension of the broader post-Olympic development surrounding the park.[109]

The Stratford Waterfront scheme, led by LLDC, is part of Johnson's 'Olympicopolis' plan to create a new cultural hub. In this massive planned development, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Sadler's Wells, the University of the Arts London, and University College London will occupy the area, promote revitalization, and market urban economic development strategies. This new £1.3bn cultural quarter is supposed to create 3,000 jobs and attract 1.5 million visitors a year, with a £2.8bn boost to the economy of Stratford and surrounding areas.[110] Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced that he will continue the development, but he is thankfully dropping his predecessor's '*Olympicopolis*' title in favor of *East London's Heritage and Cultural Quarter.*[111]

The Heritage and Cultural Quarter (HCQ) is a classic model of large-scale, top-down arts-and-culture-led urban development. It seeks to assemble museums, public arts, theaters, educational institutions, and large and small businesses as an economic growth strategy by branding a place, boosting international competitiveness, and attracting private-sector investment and cultural consumption. Such high-profile regeneration has been much criticized, because there is little evidence that local artists and communities actually benefit from such projects;[112] rather, they set the conditions for accelerated property development, gentrification, displacement, and inequality.

Newham, where HCQ resides, is already showing that this is culture-led urban development as usual. Since 2012, it has seen the highest rise in house prices of all London boroughs[113] — in 2016 alone, more than 20%.[114] Targets for affordable housing have been cut from between 35% and 40% in 2010 to 31% in 2013.[115] Only 8% of the recently built five towers in Stratford are 'affordable,' all of which are 'intermediate' units. They are priced just below market value — well beyond the reach of the average Newham resident's annual income of £29,000.[116] Newham Council is displacing low-income families as far away as Manchester due to lack of affordable housing and cuts in housing benefits.[117] In the name of inner-city renewal, billions of pounds are poured into the Olympic borough in order to attract new art and cultural and education amenities; however, this does not help artists, who experience 'constant precariousness around studio leases',[118] while the working class is barely surviving.

The V&A seems to admit its complicity in forcing artists out from the area, but emphasizes the 'enormous benefits' to nearby communities.[119] But benefit for whom? The case of the V&A brings the hortatory, community-focused rhetoric of local authorities and developers into question. The Museum is one of the UK's flagship cultural institutions, and slated to be a large employer in HQC. The growing trend at the V&A — and museums as a whole[120] — is to rely for labor on precarious 'zero-hour' contract workers or retirees and volunteers.[121] The museum is also trying to cut costs by using V&A Enterprises Ltd, a commercial arm that boasts private-sector status, and hiring new museum staff, from gallery assistants to curators, as contract workers.[122] An overwhelming amount of the jobs created by V&A and other cultural institutions in the HQC will be in low-wage services and will not pay employees enough for them to live locally. This trend is likely to continue under the leadership of its newly-appointed director, Tristram Hunt.

HCQ might have opened up opportunities for local artists' communities, which could have influenced new urban space in an organic, sustainable way. Instead, culturally-branded development is using 'communitarian credibility' to further private profit and 'economic competitiveness' at the expense of the local community.[123]

In short, a triumvirate of art, culture, and technology provides packaged ingredients to the prevailing model governing East London's redevelopment. Here East is agglomerating these ingredients to construct a new urban space of euphemistic 'innovation,' sanitizing

urban social and political conflicts and expunging artists and the working class.

Conclusion

The cases of Silicon Roundabout and Here East elucidate an inherent contradiction between the politics of creativity subscribed to by policy makers and the technology sector versus artistic freedom and working-class sustainability. It masks this inherent incompatibility by absorbing artistic expression into market relations, justifying and accelerating state- and capital-led accumulation through urban dispossession. As art, culture, and technology are often seen as inherently public goods, they make the perfect instrument for developers and local authorities alike to transform urban space into private interest, thereby diminishing people's access to the very city itself.

In response to such tendencies, urban struggles are intensifying across the world. London, Hamburg, San Francisco, New York City, Barcelona, São Paulo, and Istanbul host organic networks of urban coalitions, from artists to single mothers to tenant unions to immigrant communities. They deploy multiple tactics —squatting, direct challenges to local and federal policy makers, non-violent protest, public mobilization, and so on—and oppose the branding of cities and large-scale private developments, demanding the right to the city for all. England's new artists' union signifies a recognition that strength lies in organization.[124]

To imagine and help build democratic and just cities, more research needs to be done, interviewing and surveying artists and other residents to identity and quantify their experiences, struggles, and resistance, and compare East London with other utopias of policy/dystopias of practice, such as Bilbao, Berlin, San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, Berlin, and Mexico City. We hope that this brief pilot study of the literature on the place where we live and work will shed some light on the directions that such investigations might take.

East-side of Lea Canal, photo: Toby Miller

know
think we'll
afford it...

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