

Branding Auckland: Creating creativity and suspending disbelief

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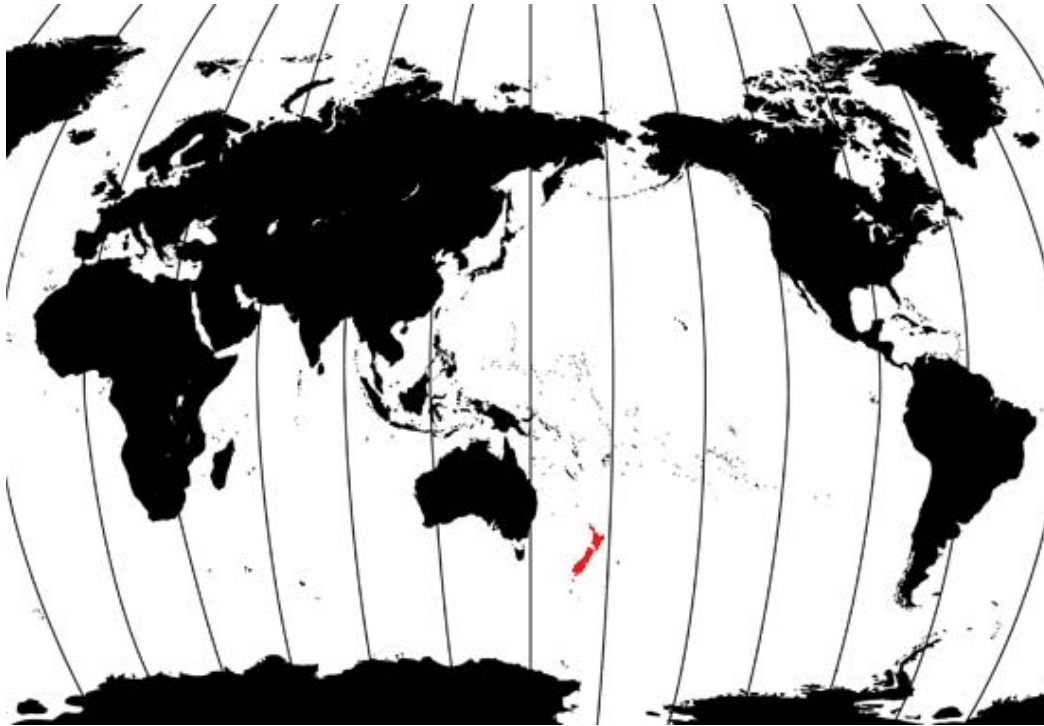
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The Big Little City?

- Three economic development initiatives in Auckland, their co-constitutiveness, and their assemblage into a creative city political project with a particular trajectory
- Creative industries, the regional brand, and 'big little city' destination branding campaign
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCGa9ekx6Mc>

A different centre



Auckland



- Auckland in New Zealand: 1.3 million from 4 million people, 40% of economy
- Eight territorial authorities (4 cities, 3 districts, and ARC)
- Each city has distinctive socio-economy and geographical imaginaries
- All are part of a greater Auckland economy and geographical imaginary
- Relatively young and growing: a city of migrants
- Economy centred on servicing national economy, hub to global economy, tourism, real estate farming
- Privatised many of its land assets
- World's largest (?) Polynesian city
- Increasingly Asian city (19% of population)
- ARC has range of functions at the regional scale but no unitary authority
- Supercity: Auckland in transition

Starting points

- Detroit, Hamburg, Darwin
 - improbable, interests/politics (who are the creative classes?), differing research focii
- Proliferation of place/nation branding
- On-going research projects
 - Waiheke: building networks with middle-senior managers
 - sustainable Auckland research initiative
 - rooms/moments and knowledge production in Auckland
 - place branding
- Speaking back to the North-Atlantic axis

Speaking back to the policy globalisation thesis

- The thesis
 - neoliberal, creative cities policy has spread outwards
 - evidence in other places of key dimensions, vectors
- Asking ‘other’ questions (agency in other places)
 - how/why/when did we go out and get ‘it’, what elements did we pick up / reject?
 - how are they assembled into local political projects, and by whom?
 - what is special about the time (after-neoliberalism)?
 - what is special about the policy?

Our questions

- What has been mobilized in Auckland's creative city project, how has it been imagined, resourced, and assembled, what trajectories have been altered?
 - how is the mix of local/ global elements assembled?
 - how coherent is the assemblage?
 - what happens to Auckland's creative city project as it bumps up against other political and economic imaginaries?
 - has the creative city been emptied into a destination branding project in Auckland?
 - what does all this tell us about contemporary city branding?
- Work in progress

The argument in brief

- Tell a familiar story about the complexity lying behind the stories of globalisation and policy transfer
- Tell a story about how the CI project as been mobilised as a platform for reinventing economic development (for a different 'soft capitalism') in which city marketing is writ large
- Not sure whether I make this effectively but in trying to do, once again open up some of the challenging questions resonating through this conference.

The Creative G(r)asp

- Efforts to
 - know, relate and theorise post-industrial and knowledge economies and the rise of the global culture industry
 - link cultural revitalisation projects to economic revitalisation
 - account for the relative fates of different cities and establish a new basis for intervention

...have directed attention to the idea of the creative economy, or more precisely creative industries, creative classes, and creative cities.
- A grand political project

Elements of the 'creative grasp'

- Creative Industries
 - Invented as a policy object to group, measure, know and manage economic activities that add value to objects through creativity, design, brand, place
 - connected later to the idea of the creative city
- Creative classes
 - **somehow** group cultural artists/producers with new highly educated, footloose, high income knowledge economy elites as 'class' held together by theorised symbiotic attraction to 'culturally rich' places and bohemian imaginaries at work in production/consumption of post-modern values
 - theorise relative success of cities via argument that creative classes take form in and are attracted to 'culturally rich' places
- Creative cities
 - exemplify and foster significant clusters of creative classes and cultural and knowledge economies
 - successful in the knowledge economy
 - an aspirational policy object for city planners

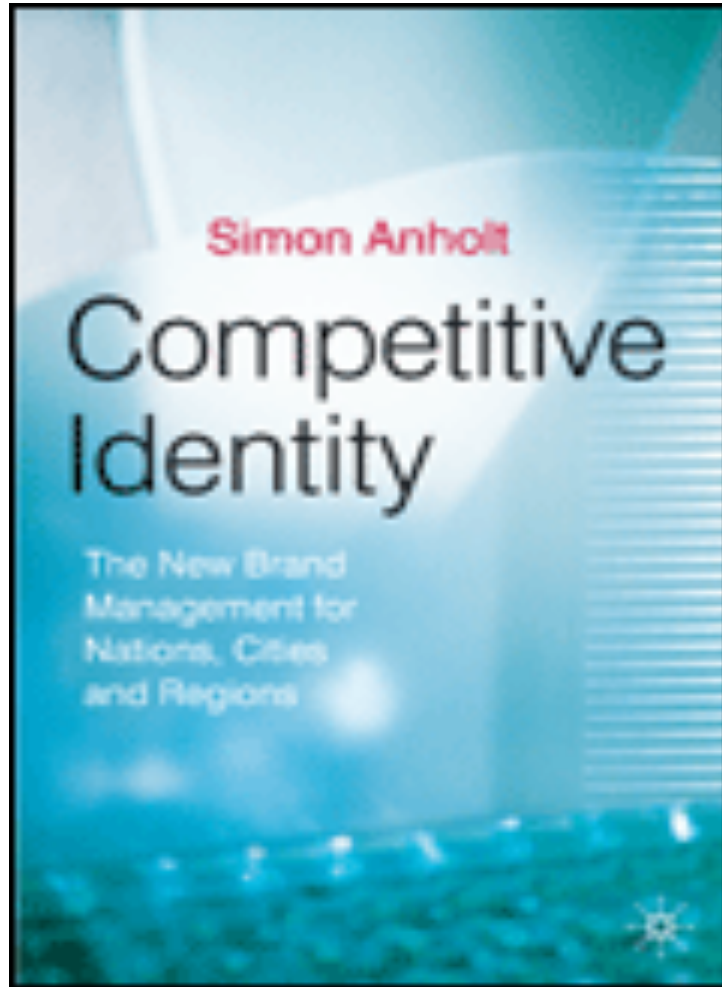
Critique from economic geography

- Positioning cities within globalizing cultural circuits of capital so as to generate rents from a peculiar mix of global aesthetics and local difference has displaced progressive, ends driven material change as the objective
- Portrayed as panacea, operates as placebo or band-aid
- Contagious disease (the Florida/Landry/CIMD effect)
- Poor diagnosis and self-interested therapy for the elites spun into the circuits
- Inextricably linked in policy practice to urban-regeneration and all of the associated issues of gentrification, displacement, over-development
- Side effects and/or treatment of symptoms rather than disease – the dark side of reproducing inequality

Place branding and the creative city

- Global policy wave, with gurus, consultancies, seminars
- Another panacea, placebo, band-aid
- Place branding
 - destination tourism
 - cultivating support for civic boosterism
 - attracting inward investment
 - performing public diplomacy
 - adding value through geographical imaginaries to final product and through reputation along value chains
- Not yet theorised into political-economy critique
 - not as historically distinct
 - more an instrument than an object for management (bundle of cultural/economic relations/activities in itself)

Globalisation/distinctiveness rationale



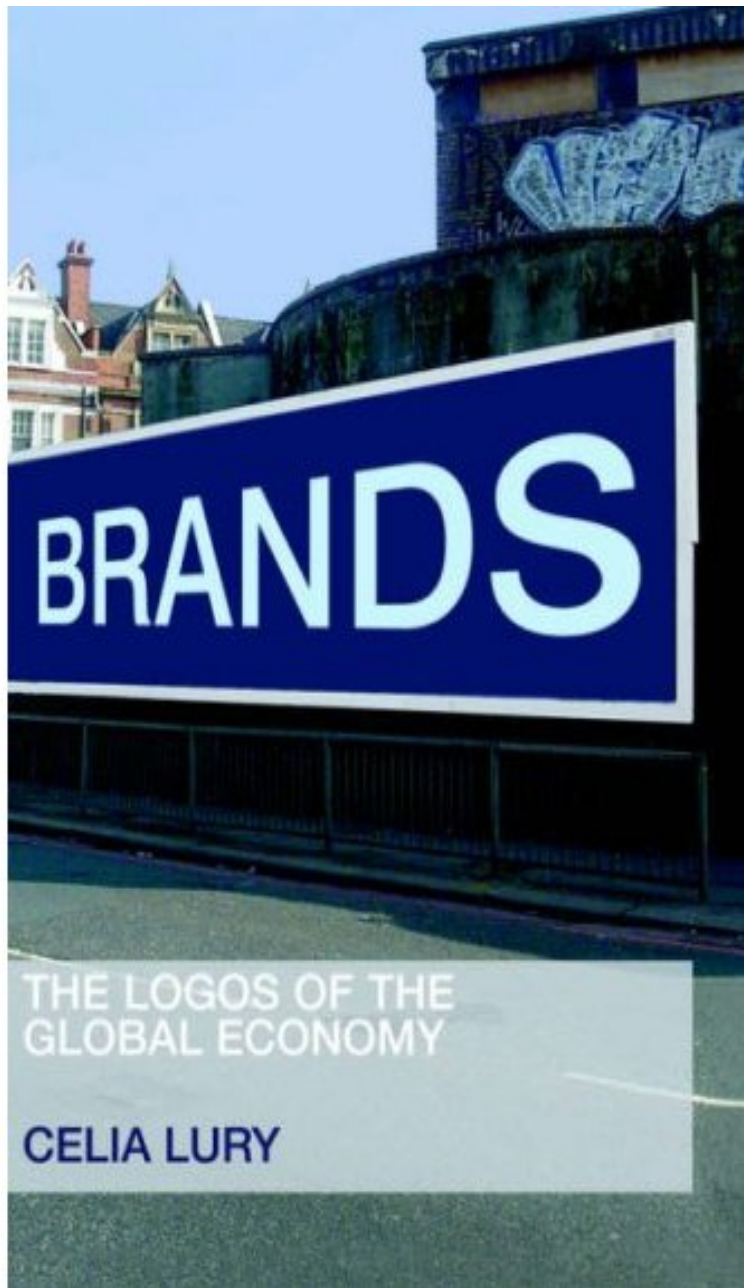
In a globalised world every country, region, city has to compete with every other: for customers, visitors, business, talent, investment, attention, respect.

To compete effectively, every place needs to be *known* for something. Brand strategy recognises special qualities as assets, teaches how to use them ...

..nothing to do with logos, slogans and everything to do with creating the right policies, the right economic, social, cultural and educational climate, and stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship in every sector of business and society.

Strong and well known brands allow cities to punch above their weight

None of this happens by accident



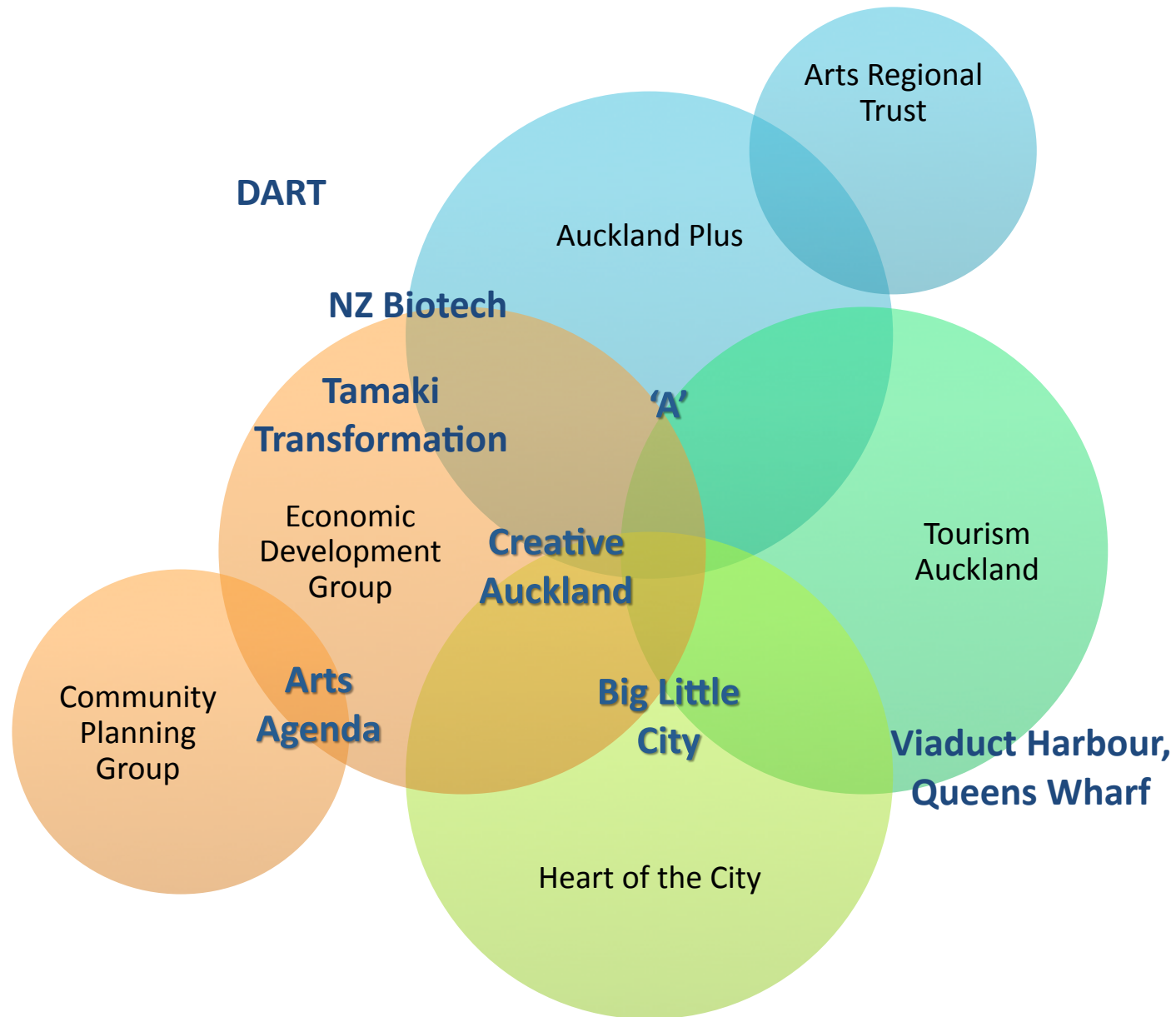
- 'The characteristics of a good are not properties which already exist ... their definition ... their objectification implies specific metrological work...'
(Callon, Meadel, Rabeharisoa 2002:198-99)
- Brands mediate relations between production and consumption: relate symbolic/material values, frame connectivities
- The branded economy links post-modern consumption values to high-value added production
- Branding is field of expertise
- Entangled in geographical referents (Pike 2008): provenance, circuits of meaning, spatiality of production-consumption
- Logos manifest brands (signs for negotiating globalising economies, production of self for a globalised elite, new status order)

Branding Creative Auckland

Auckland's creative city initiative

Date	Creative Initiative	Lead Agency	'Scale'
2000	Arts Agenda		
2002	Starkwhite Report	ACC – Consultant	Contracting out
2005	Snapshot	Economic Development Group	Auckland City
2007	Blueprint	Economic Development Group	Auckland City
2008			
2009	Brand Auckland (A) ('launched')	Auckland Plus	Auckland Regional Council
	Big Little City goes to air	Heart of the City	Private CBD group (partnership ACC, Tourism Auckland)
2011	Rugby World Cup	Ministry	National Government, ARC/Supercity
2016	Commonwealth Games in Auckland?	Auckland Plus	Supercity, National

Multiple Agencies/Projects



Contexts: a decade of.....

- Efforts to address
 - absence of metro-regional oversight, governance or planning of labour market, infrastructure, economic development
 - develop regional economic imaginaries and agencies
 - recognise economic interdependencies, collective assets, and shared fates
 - foster a metro-regional imaginary, stimulate inward investment, and (re)position Auckland within globalising cultural-economies
 - In transition again
- ‘After-neoliberal’ national policy
 - reinvent social, economic intervention through new institutions and practices
 - extraordinarily inventive/productive 2000-2003: plethora of reports, seminars, conferences, symposia
 - economic nationalism
 - globalisation project: compete from edge of world by adding value through design elements (including tourism)
 - Growth and Innovation Framework: make visible, professionalise, promote, institutionalise targeted sectors as export earners and enabling industries
 - regional development initiatives (MRI)
 - Auckland named as economic engine

Starkwhite Report

- Consultancy report – no micro-politics no confusion, idealised arts and cultural landscapes
- Rescripted Auckland's cultural arts landscapes into the promissory language of the cultural industries
- Series of quotes from gurus and claims about distinctiveness, richness, and potential of Auckland's cultural arts
- Scripting a cultural cities project in Auckland matching national 'Cool Aotearoa'

Snapshot

- Confirmed that language had shifted to creative industries in Auckland
- Measured/invented the creative industries
 - work with new ANZIC
 - mapping across Auckland
 - brought the creative to framing/scripting economic policy
- Basis for shifting support from cultural arts per se to creative economy
- Embed cultural programmes in economic policy

Naming, framing, creating creative Auckland



Interview quotes

- So those first few years of the group were set in a whole number of local, national, and global conversations ... the UK Mapping Document ... Chris Smith had been to Wellington ... Richard Florida ... NZTE were developing Better by Design ... a whole focus on the creative sector as an enabler across the rest of the economy ... at the same time as Auckland was just trying to get its act together around governance ... coordinated thinking across the region
- In developing Snapshot we did a whole lot of research internationally ... there's no point in reinventing the wheel ... we weren't also in the business of just copying other people for the sake of it ...it needed to be tailored to suit Auckland's environment, but also reflecting best practice internationally ... obviously UK, but also Toronto and Queensland ... presenting a suite of interventions that were unique to Auckland
- The ANZIC codes were key ... set the benchmark

Blueprint:

Agenda for action to implement *Snapshot*

Programme	Example
Investing in signature events	Sponsor New Zealand Fashion Week
Nurturing Talent	Music in Parks (diverse range of genres - free music to public, life into city, fees to musicians)
Building a Sense of Place	Street upgrades of K R'd – Auckland's TAZ
Design-led place-making	Mayoral Taskforce on urban design, Urban Design Panel, Design Awards Britomart transport hub
Supporting Enterprise	Arts Regional Trust and its investment programmes (ART Enterprise, ART Venture, and ART Source) Direct MRI monies to screen production for booming NZ film industry, "make Auckland world's most 'film-friendly' location"
Accelerating creative business	CUBEincubator programme co-funded by City Councils, ART and Creative NZ, and Community Employment Group

Intriguing Observations

- Policy-development networks are important
 - networking as expertise
 - facilitators, managers, creative brains in economic development planning not economists (bought in or in hard industry sector development)
- 19 of 21 officials (local government, government), officials/politicians mentioned are women
- New expertise

'Frayed A'

- Product of the Metro Project (actioning AREDS)
- Develop and brand regional value proposition, major events ('bring world to Auckland')
- Enable inward investment, tourism to "capitalise on Auckland's offer..."
- Established
 - workshops, Symposium for Auckland, Regional Visitor Plan
 - Greg Clark: OECD Floridian
 - Government's Auckland Strategy
 - engaged Design Works
- Managed by AucklandPlus (Auckland's regional economic development agency, charged with:
 - regional promotion to attract trade / investment
 - point of contact for investors, including communications and promotion
 - facilitate regional economic development projects (large, multi-agency, cross-boundary/council projects)
- Funded by New Zealand Trade & Enterprise

Big Little City

- High-end cinematography and production values
 - explicit showcasing Auckland/NZ advertising and screen talent
- Globalised aesthetics/consumption aspirations
 - creative city imaginaries
 - global culture industry (Vodafone etc)
- Local references
 - celebrity chef/gallery owner/fashion designer/popular music artists (NB no sports stars, no pristine nature)
 - Auckland's harbour bridge, skyline, volcanoes, yachts
- Contested
 - Tourism Auckland engaged Colenso
 - HoC chose Colenso over Design Works

The project still speaks: February 2010

"We are honoured to have this movie filmed in Auckland and other parts of New Zealand," says Mr Banks.



Mayor meets Yogi Bear's onscreen mayor, during filming at Auckland Town Hall

- 'Creative industries grow despite recession'
 - concentrated in design (38%), publishing (23%), screen production (23%).
 - remaining 15% in radio, digital media, performing arts, visual arts and music.
 - From **2006-2008**, employment growth six times national average (2.9% p.a. cf 0.5%), faster than overall employment growth in Auckland city (2.9% p.a. cf 2.1%)
 - contribution to Auckland city's GDP is over \$1.8 billion or 6.6% of GDP
 - continue to stimulate economic activity in other sectors.

From Creative City to Destination Branding?

“Encouraging [the creative] industries is one of the most powerful means of enhancing the city’s identity and distinctiveness, while simultaneously creating employment and generating social capital. In a world where every place is beginning to feel and look the same, cultural products and activities mark one place from the next. And tangible differences creates competitive advantage.”¹³

Charles Landry | The Art of City-Making, 2006

“We’ll be globally established as the hot place to visit, to buy from and to get content from. We’ll have capitalised on our current positioning... Overseas people will be saying, ‘that’s a place I want to partner with, do business with, undertake R&D with, manufacture with’, right across the board and in a high-value context.”

Dame Cheryl Sotheran | Snapshot: Auckland’s creative industries, 2005

Some conclusions

- Creative city/industry projects
 - mobilise local resources, encounter local resistance, take local forms
 - co-constituted by local political projects, global knowledge projects, local socio-cultural economies
- Policy transfer is as much about local assemblage
 - local assemblage *is necessary* and *necessarily provides* local resolution to central contradictions in creative city project (what is creative, artists v. commercial artists, sociability & interaction v. global city, local distinctiveness v. global imaginaries)
 - policy is always messy: multi scalar, multi-layered, public-private interpenetrations
- Place branding is central to creative city projects
- Creative Auckland
 - is being driven towards destination branding
 - has brought different expertise to bear, altered parameters of the political process, constituted networks of expertise
 - Materiality: serving tourism, head offices, real estate farming
- A positive spin?
 - rationale for reorienting investment: temporary, small sums
 - CI as basis for reinventing urban planning
- An altered, 'post-development' evaluation frame

“This policy has played out as an ecology of networks – it has its own life, as do we policy makers it has changed things ... not necessarily as expected. I am proud of the policy even though I’ve moved on”